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SERMONS

BY MINISTERS OF THE

GUELPH CONFERENCE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. JAMES GRAY.

EDITED BY

D. ROGERS,

Author of "Shot and Shell," and "Guide to Young Christians."



TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 KING ST. EAST.

MONTREAL: C. W. COATES.

HALIFAX: S. F. HUESTIS.

1886.

THE

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Preface.

A BOOK that is not read is useless, though it be as learned as an encyclopedia, and as true as the multiplication table.

The editor of this volume was convinced that if he could secure a sufficient number of short, racy discourses from the ministers of the Guelph Conference, published in a cheap form, they would have a large sale and be widely read,—at least within the bounds of our own Conference—and at the same time furnish a valuable addition to our home Methodist literature.

The ready response of so many brethren to contribute, gave evidence that they approved of the project.

The entire profits accruing from its sale will be applied to the Superannuated Minister's Fund.

May the Holy Spirit accompany and bless the reading in as great measure as He has the preaching of these sermons!

If this volume secures general approval, a second may be issued in 1887.

D. R.

ALMA CRAIG,
August 26th, 1886.

INTR

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Introduction.

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THE ministry of the Word is a work that angels might covet. The truths which the ambassador of God is expected and required to declare are God-given and soul-saving. He holds an important position among the moral forces of the universe. It is his privilege and honor to uplift and ennoble humanity. Ministers are said to be the "moral police" of the world. The weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and "mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds" of sin and Satan. Truth, the sword of the Spirit, is two-edged. It is designed to cut its way to the hearts and consciences of men of all grades and classes. It makes manifest to the man himself the innermost thoughts of his heart. It tears aside every refuge of lies, and shows the sinner what he is in God's sight. It points him to the only method by which "God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

The ministers of the Methodist Church, during the last century and more, have been like the flying artillery of God's great army. No other class of men more fully represent the apocalyptic angel of St. John flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel

to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The world has been emphatically their "parish." They have refused to be trammelled by any narrower limits. Well and faithfully have they fulfilled their Lord's commission, "Go." Since the organization of Methodism they have been going—they are going still, and are destined to go till the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God.

The economy and doctrines of Methodism are fitted for universal dissemination. The tenets she holds in relation to the sinfulness of sin, the universality of the atonement, the knowledge of personal acceptance with God, the direct witness of the Spirit, and the present possibility and necessity of holiness of heart and life, commend themselves to all men as sufficient to meet the felt needs of our common humanity, and stimulate our zeal in acquiring those broad and comprehensive views of duty and privilege, and those richer experiences of the Christian life which satisfy the highest aspirations of our hearts. These doctrines as preached by Methodist ministers have already produced wonderful changes in the life, experience, and character of many connected with other sections of the Church of God. And they are destined to produce still more powerful effects on the faith, and hopes, and destinies of the world. They are scriptural in character, universal in application, and perpetual in their beneficial tendency and effects.

Methodism has not contributed so largely to the

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religious literature of the world as some of the older churches of Christendom. This is not to be attributed so much to lack of ability as to lack of leisure. She has been so busy with evangelistic work that she has had comparatively little time for the production of large and comprehensive theological works; and yet she has not altogether neglected such studies and compositions. Some of her sons have attained high distinction in this field. Comparatively few of the sermons of her divines have been published; but those that have been put into print have not been lacking in merit and usefulness, in pith, and pathos, and power, as compared with similar productions emanating from other pens.

It is freely admitted that there are many advantages arising from the public preaching of God's Word that cannot be attained by bringing the truth to bear on the hearts of men in any other way. It is a divinely appointed institution. "It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe." It can never be superseded in the economy of Christianity. The living voice, the speaking eye, the inter-communion of spirit with spirit, must and will produce, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, its own powerful effects on the hearts and minds of hearers. But we are not justified in inferring from this fact that the written sermon has no advantages. It, too, has its own particular sphere of usefulness. It gives the opportunity of more careful preparation as to its plan, its style, and its modes of expression. It enables us to examine

the doctrines presented more narrowly and critically, and compare them with the only infallible standard of truth—the sacred volume. It gives an opportunity for a review, and thus enables us to fix more firmly in our minds and hearts the thoughts of the author.

It is hoped that this volume of sermons will add something to the theological lore of the Church of Christ; but especially that it will have a tendency to quicken our piety, stimulate our zeal, and lead us up to the attainment of a higher state of Christian experience; and thus build up in our own and other churches a grander and nobler type of Christian manhood.

The profits of the work are to be devoted for the benefit of the Superannuation Fund of the Methodist Church.

JAMES GRAY.

TORONTO, *July 30th, 1886.*

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GRAY.

I.

THREE SISTERS.

BY REV. W. S. GRIFFIN, D.D.,

President of Guelph Conference.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

THERE is no doubt, then, as to the relative qualities of these several graces. Among sisters in a household there is not unfrequently one who is acknowledged to be superior to the others. As in any cluster of stars there is always one that shines brighter than the rest; as in any bed of flowers there is always one that exceeds all others in beauty and in fragrance; as in any collection of pearls there is always one superior in attraction and in real value;—so in every family there is sure to be one that excels the rest in personal accomplishments. An unerring Judge has settled the question in this family: “Faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” I propose to consider very briefly the character of each.

I. FAITH.

Now do not mistake the person. There are more than one of this name, and it is no uncommon thing to confound different individuals who happen to have the same name. Out of such errors serious embarrassments and difficulties have arisen. Do you enquire whether the faith of which I speak is simply an assent of the mind to the truth of God? I answer, No. Or is it the faith that believes in miracles? Again I answer, No. Or is it the faith that credits a fact because of the evidence of our senses? Still I answer, No. Is it, then, the faith that credits a thing because it is consistent with our philosophy, or because of the testimony of others? No, none of these. These are excellent characters, but are all the poor relations only of the one of whom I wish to speak. This is the faith which appropriates the Word of God, and reposes a saving trust in the merits of Christ, and rejoices in conscious salvation. She is well known and highly distinguished, having lived in intimate companionship with the grand old patriarchs and prophets, and with all holy men in all ages of the world's history. It is the faith that saves.

She is very rich. She possesses "the substance of things hoped for." The circumstances of a person have generally much to do with the character. On this account it is important not to overlook the circumstances of Faith.

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There is no possible computation of her wealth. All arithmetics will fail in the calculation. She controls immeasurable resources on earth and in heaven. She commands the present and the future: the revenues of two worlds. She has as many diamonds as God has stars. She owns valuable property in many kingdoms of this world, and in every other world that angel ever saw or God ever made. She derives her income from all the fields of immensity, and distributes her gifts with boundless benevolence among all her children, to whom she says, "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."

And, what must never be forgotten, she accumulated her fortune by her own personal effort. When she began life she had absolutely nothing. She had no friends even, while enemies innumerable combined to make her enterprise a failure; but by the legitimate exercise of inherent and indomitable energy she appropriated one territory after another, and demonstrated that "all things are possible" to Faith.

She lives in queenly style. Her palace is built in the region of God's presence. God Himself is in the light of its chambers, in the glory of its gates, in the splendor of its precious stones, in the fragrance of its bowers, and in the music of its choirs. Here she collects her offspring, clothed with the costly robes of righteousness. Here she spreads for them the table of the Lord, laden with sumptuous fare. From every

region of poverty, from every habitation of sorrow, from every district of death, in all generations of mankind she gathers her guests, and here they abide forever.

She is as brave as she is opulent. Fear to her is an unknown sensation. The thundering artillery of war, the horrors of ghastly famine, the ravages of devouring pestilence, do not make her afraid. She walks through all these fields of desolation without concern for her personal safety. When thrones totter, and the foundations of the earth are shaken, and the "elements melt with fervent heat;" when God wraps the world in the fires of final conflagration, turns the moon into blood and puts out the light of the stars, still she is not afraid. With sublime courage she faces a dissolving universe. Having settled the premiums of an ample insurance, she fears no loss. Having already conquered in every field of conflict, she fears no danger. The triumphs of the world's great warriors were mere toys in comparison with her achievements. Having subdued every human lust, and mastered every human passion, and routed whole legions of devils, in the wide domain of the universal and the everlasting, there is nothing for her to fear.

II. HOPE.

Though there are strong points of resemblance between Hope and Faith, sufficient to show that they are nearly related (any one, indeed, would know that they are sisters), yet they differ widely in many particulars.

of sorrow, from
 as of mankind
 abide forever.
 ear to her is a
 rtillery of wa
 es of devouring
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 elements mel
 e world in the
 on into blood
 ill she is not
 es a dissolving
 of an ample
 dy conquered
 danger. The
 ere mere toys
 Having sub
 every human
 evils, in the
 everlasting.

Hope is sanguine. The world to the human eye is
 ed with dire and endless confusion. There is the
 enter of adversity, whose cold winds and biting frosts
 est the buds of promise in every generation. There
 the dreadful visitations of pestilence, whose putre-
 ing breath poisons and fills the world with fear; and
 war, which stains the earth with blood. There are
 certainties, irregularities and disappointments every-
 here, and out of them all flow floods of sorrow, and
 er them all broods the darkness of despair. Yet in
 ch a world as this Hope is ever cheerful. Her
 atures are always radiant with the light of a perfect
 y. She is the best of company. She captivates all
 arts with her rapturous description of the brighter
 and better days that are yet to come, when youth shall
 ever fade and man shall never die. She visits the
 d and inspires them with the freshness of youth.
 e speaks to the children of want and fills their
 sion with the days of plenty. She believes, and
 akes all listeners feel, that the desert shall become a
 uitful field, and the wilderness blossom as the rose.
 She sings as well as talks, and her songs are sweet
 the carols of the sky. She knows more songs than
 e in the song-book. She knows songs for every day
 the year, and for every hour in the day. Songs
 at are full, to all, of holiest inspiration. She sings
 e song of the "golden harvest" to the fainting hus-
 andman. She sings the "song of freedom" to the
 ptive in his gloomy, grated cell. She sings the
 es of liberty to the wretched slave, who drags the

chains of bondage through all his fields of toil. She floods the melody of "Home, sweet home" upon the listening ear of the weary, wayworn pilgrim. She inspires, while she sings to the storm-tossed mariner, who is battling with the billows of the sea, "We'll anchor here by and bye."

She paints as well as sings. The canvas ever affected day receives the traces of her rich and wondrous fancy. (2) She paints no ocean storms, nor fields of blood. She paints no scenes of anguish, no home of penury, no couch of suffering. She paints no winter landscape, where frost and snow have withered all things fresh and green. But she paints the sky when it is blue, and the earth when it is green. She paints the fruitful orchards when they blossom into fruitfulness, and the (3) harvest fields when they ripen into plenty. Every phase of life and every field of nature which makes life full of gladness she reproduces with marvellous skill. Every apartment of her abode is a drawing-room, and on every wall hangs a picture that an angel might covet for his heavenly dwelling place. And every day she adds to the vast collection. Such is her Hope—beautiful, gifted and divine.

III. CHARITY.

Another name for love. Whatever may be said of the others, yet Charity is the favorite one—and a full-sized portrait of Charity is given in the chapter from which the text is taken.

(1) Charity is humble, though a princess of royal

of toil. She is related to the aristocracy of heaven. With
 "home" upon her there is no pomp, parade or show. Though highly
 a pilgrim. Stern and highly gifted, she disdains not the lowly
 -tossed marine walks of common life. Her apparel, her gait, the tone
 "We'll anchor her voice, the expression of her countenance, prepare
 to hear that "she vaunteth not herself and is not
 canvas everuffed up."

vondrous fancy (2) Charity is generous: however much others may
 of blood. She enriched, still she would give them more,—give to
 of penury, she the sceptre of power, to another the treasures of
 enter landscape wisdom and knowledge, and yet to another the
 all things fresh diamonds of wealth,—she envies not, but prays that
 when it is blue they may be increased a thousand-fold, and distributed
 she paints the thousand times more among all the sons of men.

fulness, and the (3) Charity is affectionate, she is the very soul of
 plenty. Every goodness; every one shares in her benedictions and
 which make benefactions. She speaks tenderly, and gives abundantly;
 with mavelously; she loves the most degraded and wretched of
 is a drawing of mankind. Any one can admire the beautiful and love
 that an angel good; but in the unlovely she finds something to
 g place. And admire, and in the essentially bad something to love.
 tion. Such she stretches out her arms of affection to the black
 African, as well as the white Caucasian. She knows
 no distinction of race, of color, or of creed. She sits
 by the fireside of the slave, as well as in the palace of
 may be said the king. She visits the thieves in their dens of
 white one—and family, and the abandoned of every name in their
 in the chapters of villainy. She covers the faults and failures
 of men as well as she can—she takes their part as far
 as she dare, and blesses them all infinitely more than

they deserve. Such is her character briefly told, as in surveying the qualities of these three beautiful sisters it is hard to say which is the most attractive. Each has charms peculiar to herself. We love and admire them all, and if we do not know how to decide their respective merits, the Apostle knows, and decides: "Faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Why is Charity judged the greatest? There are many reasons, a very few of which only may be stated. Faith and Hope derive their exalted qualities from Charity. The gifts of angels, the eloquence and poetry of men, all so full of Faith and Hope, if unaccompanied and unsustained by Charity are as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Faith and Hope, endowed with the gifts of prophecy, and enriched with the understanding of all mysteries and knowledge, are clothed with power to remove the mountains of the earth, at the expense of the sea, owe their vast attainments and achievements to the cultivation and inspiration that Charity supplies. She has raised them up from the obscure walks of life in which they lived when they gave their confidence only to those things which were capable of logical demonstration. But now by the aid of Charity their character and life are changed; they trust God where they cannot trace Him. They learn the things that cannot be proved and known them to be true.

Faith and Hope are great workers, busy with the work of the world's salvation; they seek and find the

er briefly told, as they feed and clothe the poor, they cure the
 se three beautiful and dying, and yet in all this wonderful field
 he most attractive toil they are powerless without the presence and
 elf. We love a part of their sister Charity—

now how to de-
 le knows, and
 se three; but t

"'Tis love that makes their cheerful feet
 In swift obedience move."

draws and guides and moves, because she is divine.
 rein lies her marvellous charms and her measureless
 ver. She fills the immensity of space with the
 sic of the spheres. She fills the region of chaotic
 kness with the light of the stars. She fills the sea
 h pearls, and the mountains with gold. She pre-
 ed the fields in which Faith and Hope may toil.
 e opened the fountains at which they satisfy their
 rst. She built the house in which they dwell. "The
 eatest of the three is charity"—the greatest because
 mortal. By and by

owe their va-
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 has raised the

hich they live
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 nstration. Bu
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not trace Him with the end of time, Faith and Hope, as known to
 oved and kno- en, will have filled up the measure of their days.
 ey die when their work is done. But Love lives on
 ousy with th- ever. And if every man on earth were dead, and
 k and find th- ery angel in heaven, still she would live. She lived

"Faith will be lost in sight,
 And Hope in full fruition die."

"Love is the grace that lives and sings,
 When Faith and Hope shall cease;
 'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings,
 In the sweet realms of bliss."

before them and can live after them if they cease to be. If the universe were blotted out, the light of worlds extinguished, while Faith and Hope would perish in the wreck of all things, Love, that lived before the worlds were made, would live after they are destroyed,—for “*God is love.*”

APPLICATION.

1. Our capacity to love is a proof of our relationship to God. In the heart of God there is no faith nor hope, and if there were only these in the heart of man, he could never say “Our Father which art in heaven.”

2. The weakness of our faith and hope is explained by our littleness of love. Our faith and hope will increase with the growth of our love.

3. If we lose our hope, instead of seeking for it we should seek for love: finding love we find our hope.



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and Hope would
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II.

FROM FAITH TO FAITH.

BY REV. A. CARMAN, D.D.,

Belleville.

“From faith to faith.”—Rom. i. 17.

WE shall understand this scripture more readily and fully if we look at it in the light of what we think a great deal more about, and know a great deal more of, than we do of the great powers and possibilities of the gradations of faith. The world lives by sight, by sense; and not by expanding investigation, by faith. For even enlarging knowledge grows upon faith; faith in the faculties, the processes, the instruments and the results of preceding investigation. When we learn easily, and when our thought dwells, we make in common life many gradations and distinctions as the most perplexing of the philosophers have in the most complex of their systems. I have been amused to hear the ladies discussing the colors, hues, and shades of a ribbon or a feather. What with their blue and purple; their azure and cerulean blue, deep blue

and light blue, royal blue and navy blue, indigo blue and cobalt; deep purple and royal purple, heathen purple and mauve, Tyrian purple and amethyst, and more than a score of tinges and touches besides. Where are your metaphysicians and scientists in their labored lists and Greek-cut nomenclatures? Of course the ladies are dealing with sublime and important matters, while the men of the schools are handling trifles and sporting with trinkets; still it shows that when we live and think we draw as many lines and mark as many differences as other people when they live and think. And we laugh at their divisions, while they heap contempt upon ours. The politicians see no use arguing about expiatory atonement, commercial atonement, covenant atonement, foreordained atonement, after-thought atonement, what difference does it make anyhow? These are the distinctions of the punctilious theologians. But the same politicians go frantic over a revenue tariff, a protective tariff, a prohibitory tariff; over Dominion rights and Province rights; Imperial prerogatives and Home-rule, matters of altogether secondary importance in the mind of the theologian. Men that sell flour, oysters, or cheese have brands and grades enough to confound six metaphysicians; and yet the psychologist or the preacher who would distinguish between betwixt affection, intuition, conscience and desire, the enforcement of moral law and spiritual freedom and accountability, is making, these practical men say, distinctions without differences, and just talking and talking to hear himself talk.

navy blue, ind We understand some other things better than we
royal purple, he the things of faith, because we live and think
and amethyst, a other realms than the realm of faith. We know
touches besides something of the greatness and the glory and excel-
l scientists in the of the other realms, while we scarcely give to
atures? Of cou h a realm at all, but a shadowy, dreamy, fitful,
ne and importa certain coming and going without plan, purpose,
ools are hand over or product. We have little or no faith in
still it shows th h; and yet to help our faith we often sing:—

w as many li
other people
ve laugh at the
upon ours. T
expiatory ato
enant atoneme
ght atonement
ow? These

“The things unknown to feeble sense,
Unseen by reason’s glimmering ray,
With strong commanding evidence
Their heavenly origin display.
Faith lends its realizing light ;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly ;
The Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.”

heologians. Faith is a philosophy—a broad domain of truth and
a revenue tax knowledge. Faith is a kingdom—a broad domain of
; over Dominio, order and peace. Faith is an empire—a broad
prerogatives ab main of sovereignty, majesty and power. Faith
condary impos the heavenly treasury and glory—a broad domain

Men that s wealth, privilege, dignity, happiness and abiding
nds and grad

ns; and yet t “From faith to faith.” Let us see if we can climb
ould distinguish some height where we can catch a glimpse of this
e and desire er expanding vision of beauty, power and glory.
al freedom an e eye strengthens with the eagerness of the gaze.
tical men sa e mists roll off, the landscape unfolds, and the light
ust talking an ightens and increases with the longing of our look

and the intensity of our desire to see and employ grace and strength at hand, and to behold the far-advanced riches and splendors.

We very often say, "from wealth to wealth." We know what that means, because we live and think of that domain. We can see it, hear it, feel it, handle it, experience it; so we know what that means. We can smell it, taste it, eat it, drink it, wear it; so we know it. The young man begins empty handed and ears the axe upon his shoulder. Soon by hard strokes and hard fare he earns the wood or the potash that builds the land. "From wealth to wealth." The land is cleared; the house is built and the barn; and the golden grain fills the granary and lies in heaps upon the floor. "From wealth to wealth." The mansion appears, ten larger barns, the broader fields. We know what that means. "From wealth to wealth." Industry, good management and care, and riches abound. Not chance work; not carelessness or indifference; not scorn of right means or little products; not disregard of the laws or principles of increase; but ceaseless labor, vigilance and economy. Over and above his fixed possessions, our young man, now in the prime of life, has money to let out at interest. His farm and work add to his store; his money accumulates in his hands. We know what this means: "Wealth to wealth." Money now, a power in itself, by proper direction, makes money. Soon the capability of personal accumulation has nearly reached the summit, and he ventures upon the social powers of increase. He invests with other

see and employ. Enterprises too great for the individual combine
 behold the far-aw fructify the capital. Ships float upon the seas;
 thunder over the continents; great factories de-
 h to wealth." Up hidden resources, and the energies of nature pile
 e live and think treasures at command. "From wealth to wealth."
 it, feel it, handle know what that means. Our young man that
 at means. We old scarce purchase an axe now sends his fleets upon
 ear it; so we kn ocean and his great railway trains through cities
 handed and eat fields, forests and mines. What a little ago was a
 y herd strokes a ggle to live is now mighty to conquer to the ends
 e potash that bu the earth. The improvement of the opportunity,
 lth." The land use of the means, has exalted the empty-handed
 rn; and the gold th—then utterly helpless and powerless in the
 aps upon the floes of the rich—to a seat among the merchant
 nsion appears, tances and the potentates of gold. He who had not
 e know what the pper now has millions of dollars. He that could
 " Industry, go get an acre and a cow can now swing vast estates,
 ound. Not char amship lines and railway and telegraph systems;
 nce; not scorn ed he can poise and swing them as easily as once he
 disregard of tald his axe or scythe. "Wealth to wealth." We
 aseless labor, vigow what that means; for we think there, and love
 e his fixed possed labor to live there.
 prime of life, h So we have a way of saying, "from strength to
 rm and work at length," and "from power to power." We know
 in his hands. V what that means, because we live there. There
 wealth." Mon is a time, my dear friend, when you could not lift
 direction, mak the spoon that fed you. Now likely you can lift
 nal accumulatio wls, platters, and porringers. The infant cannot
 e ventures upo asp and break the straw; but soon it handles the
 vests with othe life, the hammer—and hard substances yield and

weighty bodies move. What could not lift a pebble or a splinter, now can heave a stone or carry a load. What could not walk a step or stand alone, now contends in the race with the horse, or in flight with the deer or the ostrich. "From strength to strength." We understand that because we see it and feel it, we meet its conditions and prove it. We eat and breathe and grow, and pull and push and run and lift and strike, and our strength increases; and we say, "This is all very natural and reasonable. Why, it cannot be otherwise. What else could you expect?" And the man, applying his strength by lever, wheel and pulley, can lift rocks out of their deep beds, can tear up by their roots the giants of the forest. Monuments and mental piles attest his strength. Pyramids, huge and hoary, proclaim his power. Laying under tribute the forces of Nature, he can stem the tides and breast the storms of ocean, rend the rock-ribbed earth and cleave asunder the granite walls and adamantine towers of the ancient mountains. "From strength to strength." We understand that; at least some do. There are, indeed, those that have as little comprehension of even that in its grander demonstrations and mighty achievements, as they have of "from faith to faith." But as we use strength, live by strength, increase strength—get it by eating, drinking, breathing, sleeping—we come to know a little of it, and of its nature and laws and energies and results. It grinds and graduates its very ideas and character into us; we learn a little lesson every day, and after a while this

could not lift a requirements prodigious. We get confidence in stone or carry a length, trust in strength, faith in strength, hour by stand alone, now and effort by effort; and sometimes, by an extra- e, or in flight with any effort and extraordinary achievement, we strength to strength on "from strength to strength" delightfully see it and feel it gloriously. And we combine our strength with

We eat and breathe strength of others, and navies cover the sea, and and run and lift visible armies thunder over the continents and s; and we say, "Let the earth tremble under their terrible tread. able. Why, it crosses of strength and palaces of splendor crown could you expect hills; and marts of trade and hives of labor crowd ngth by lever, wheel, and pulleys. Rome was small and feeble at the begin- their deep beds, but Britain had her days of littleness and weak- of the forest. Men, but daring energy and skill brought one tribe Pyramids, huge, another into subjection. Seven hills were ing under tribute, eight to one Capitoli, seven kingdoms to one hept- tides and breast. "From power to power." Better government bed earth and cleared and better laws: wiser men in council and lamantine towers, braver men in the field. Mightier armies went forth strength to strength, nobler politics, and monster regions owned their me do. There is. "From power to power." We understand that. e comprehension, written in living characters in all history. He ations and might, runs, reads. He must read—he must see it, if from faith to faith sees anything. It is the law of the growth of strength, increments. And Rome in the ancient day ruled all g, breathing, sleeping, and Britain to-day has broad empire, because t, and of its nature to their heights they climbed step by step, or leaped s. It grinds ahead upon bound, improving their opportunities, character into us; and against all opposition holding steadily on through after a while this centuries their high career. Comparing earthly

things with heavenly, spiritual interests and energies, and with material interests and energies, partial and temporal empire with universal and eternal dominions, human and carnal weapons and powers with those that are celestial and divine,—they, in their sphere, did what the Church of God by faith is expected and appointed to accomplish in its sphere. In politics, from association, apprehending the principles and processes of social and national advancement by rising from stage to stage or leaping from height to height, the Church achieved in the individual improvements and in public affairs all that is asked of faith, considering that she hath her eternal hold on God, and for her weapon His omnipotent touch. Is it the wonder that faith hath done so much or so little? Has she been exercised and demonstrated in any good degree in her strength and glory? Has she had a fair chance? Here we know from human action and record what she can accomplish? Nations have shown and proved their greatest strength; political energies some of their highest developments; but faith—faith is yet as an infant in the cradle, or as a young bird that hath not risen from its nest. “From power to power we know something of. Would that we knew what this meaneth: “From faith to faith!”

Again, we often say, “from skill to skill.” We understand that. There was a time, my dear friend, when under the blaze of noon you could not direct a spoon to your mouth; now most of us could find our mouths in the dark. There was a time when you

sts and energic could not draw a line; now some could shape the partial and ten man face divine. There was a time when a dozen eternal dominions and great struggles would not put the hand to vers with those spot intended; now, perchance, the keys can be in their sphere truck with precision, and the quick and nimble is expected and gers do the sharpest, closest bidding every time. re. In politics from skill to skill." We seem to know all about this. es and processes eat by it, we dress by it, we paint and pencil by it; by rising from d so we sing, and play our instruments of music. t to height, theaphael once could not draw the picture of a gate, or ements and tint fit for a fence post; but there came a time when ith, considering could put upon the canvas the hate of hell in a od, and for human eye, and demon's scorn upon human lip, or he the wonder that ould make the countenance radiant with a heavenly ? Has she beight and serene with a heavenly benignity. Michael od degree in heangelo once could not knock a chip off a stone; but air chance? Dere came a time when, with an intensity of enthu-record what shism and a gleaming rapidity of stroke, he could own and proveake the marble all alive with his own great soul, ergies some d eloquent of inspiring memories and heroic deeds. th—faith is yeozart once could not touch a key; but there came a young bird thame, in the slow process and rigid discipline of the power to powerars, when he could evoke from voiceless chords we knew whacheat melodies, and stir to their depths even stupid uls by seraphic strains. "From skill to skill." What to skill." With not patient exercise wrought in art and in arms, my dear friend merchandise and mechanics, in lofty enterprise and ould not direct a common life? What polish of implement, what s could find oulicacy of touch, what precision of stroke, what soft-time when yoss of filament, what fineness of fabric, what ease of

production, what aid of refinement, what abounding comforts and high wrought luxuries have not been obtained by cultivation and ease. "From skill to skill we understand it. It is all about us, and on us, and in us. We see it, and hear it, and smell it, and we eat it, and eat it—and so we know. In such things, and by such processes, we are wide-awake and acute and know. We are eager to know, as the Son of Man discerned, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed." The Apostle caught at it and hit our case when he wrote "These speak evil of the things they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." That is our portrait we fill that bill.

What did Raphael do in painting that Paul did not accomplish, in solid reality, in sublime endeavor and holy living? What did Michael Angelo do in making marble speak that John Wesley did not achieve by inciting and enabling stolid ignorance and disgusting brutality to shout the praises of the Most High God? What did Mozart do in sending his heart-throbs and soul-thrills along the harp strings that Martin Luther and John Fletcher did not accomplish in waking up dead Germany, and soothing into the sweetness of love an arousing England? How did Julius Cæsar exceed Moses, or Columbus surpass Coke? Wherein is Hannibal better than Joshua, or Cato than Daniel, Cicero than Apollon, or Plato than Paul? But, to say, our side is natural and historical: the other side

, what abundance of the supernatural, in the moral and religious realm, and
 es have not been super-historical. But who draws the line betwixt the
 from skill to skill, natural and supernatural? What monarch of opinion
 us, and on us, as criticism establishes the bounds, determining what
 smell it, and we and forces he will let into history, and what he
 n such things, and keep out? What is natural to the roe is super-
 take and acute, natural to the bat or the owl; what is supernatural to
 the Son of Man, pig is natural to the man, and what is supernatural
 and what shall the lout and boor is natural to the scholar and the
 be clothed." True. Morality and religion have their forces and
 e when he wrote facts as well as commerce, art and war. Who is
 ey know not; bled to ignore their fibre in the social fabric or
 e beasts, in their part in human affairs? Who can disown or dis-
 hat is our portrait, the principles that sustain and enliven them, the
 poses they cherish, the means they employ, or the
 that Paul did not secure? What good thing in humanity
 time endeavor and not faith in God touched, ennobled and strength-
 ngelo do in making? Faith in God has its records, its examples—
 did not achieve too few—its heroes, its victors, its fine products
 nce and disgust, its wretchedly wrought, its needle-work and fine linen, its
 e Most High God, its precious stones and gold. It, too, has its polished
 s heart-throbs and its completed works, its perfected glories. It
 hat Martin Luther, its right of way over the continents, its track upon
 sh in waking up seas, and the freedom of the globe. We mount
 e sweetness of love, faith to faith as we do from wealth to wealth,
 Julius Cæsar exchange skill to skill, and from power to power.

Wherein is Hæst so we often say, "from knowledge to knowledge."
 e than Daniel, as we are and ignorant as we are, we are sharp
 Paul? But, though and learned enough to know what that means.
 cal: the other side was a time, my friend, that you did not know

that one and one are two; that vinegar is sour and sugar sweet; that friends are of use to you, and unsupported you die. Now likely most of us have the elements of the multiplication table; we have gone far enough along on close examination to tell sugar from salt; and homesick or lonesome, we would rather have company than be left to ourselves. That is quite a sweep of knowledge, even in civilized countries, and some people are immensely proud of it, and quite put up and satisfied with it. Newton began as far as any of us. There was a time when he could not add or subtract, could not draw a triangle, and did not know a right angle from an acute. But he came to know the power of arithmetic and analysis, learned the properties of triangles and curves, and could calculate heights and distances on sea or on land. "From knowledge to knowledge." Then he swung out his triangles into the heavens and swept his curves through illimitable space, measured the distances of the planets, weighed them trembling as in scales, and with precision calculated their stupendous movements and the vicissitudes of their coming and going. He even caught wild comets in his curves and predicted their departure and return. "From knowledge to knowledge." We know what that means. Once Faraday did not know an alkali or an acid, and Hugh Miller did not know a lime from a granite. But day by day Faraday studied the earths, alkalis, oxides, the solvents, selections of affinities, till, intimate with elements, forces and compounds, he stood the master of chemical analysis.

vinegar is sour, applied the useful arts with boundless treasures and
use to you, and cities. And day by day Miller studied strata and
y most of us have nations till he stood convinced God had not left
ble; we have got self without witness in the rocks any more than
on to tell sugar the majestic framework of the heavens. "From
we would rather knowledge to knowledge." From the learning of the
ves. That is quite abet to the reading of all books of all languages,
vilized countries, to the understanding of all philosophy and history,
of it, and quite science and art. What more does faith expect of
n began as far man; what more, considering its object, range and
e when he could abilities? From as small and almost despicable
a triangle, and dimensions, here are results in their sphere as vast and
nte. But he canorous as the rapt seers in oriental imagery could
and analysis, least for faith. Right before our face and eyes we
urves, and could call for riches and strength, for learning and skill,
a or on land. "If we deny to faith and the higher sentiments and
en he swung out nobler philosophies. With human resources and
swept his curves, tion it is quite plain and easy; with divine wis-
stances of the plane and power it is far beyond our knowledge and
ales, and with precision. To men it is quite possible, from wealth to
ements and the wealth or knowledge to knowledge; but to God utterly
g. He even caught possible, from faith to faith. Men can enlarge their
redicted their departments and do the wonders; the omnipotent God is
knowledge." Well, less and His strength is gone that He cannot lift a
ay did not know a! Is not this flagrant rejection of God and dam-
d not know a lime, nbelief? Is it any wonder our Lord should
ay Faraday studied: "O fools and slow of heart to believe!
lvents, selections, is it ye do not understand?" Here are as great
ments, forces and powers, as great possibilities, as great realities and
chemical analysis, ements in learning, in skill, in riches and power.

Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with the God-power entreats that there should be energy and results commensurate with the new elements and resources brought into action?

But, they say, with strength and riches, to sense and experience, this advancement is quite clear. Yet they abandon their own ground when they admit or affirm it of learning and skill. What sense gives them the perfect triangle or perfect circle? Can they smell the taste the multiplication table? Can they see Angels soul on fire as it glows in the chisel and gives the mallet its touch and its aim? Do they get Newton's flights of analysis and sweep of demonstration by sniffing or winking like a hog or pricking their ears like a horse? On the other hand, what is there a man can experience, if he cannot experience in his soul the energies of a new faith? What is there a man can feel, if he cannot feel the inspiration of a holy trust in God, a divine Heavenly Father? What is there a man can see, if he cannot see on this earth the fruits of faith and love in the right living of many people, in the victories of truth and righteousness, and in the foundations and maintenance of various and multiplied institutions begotten of and demonstrating a benevolence infinitely above sense or selfishness? Faith may send down some roots and fibres into the muck-heap of sense but sense alone will never yield the bright, beautiful flowers, and golden, luscious fruits of faith.

But, they say, wealth and knowledge increase with the generations, and the son has the benefit of the strength and

thing incredible which should be energy, the new elements and riches, to sense and it clear. Yet they admit or affirm, and give them the Can they smell in they see Angels, and gives to they get Newton, onstration by snatching their ears like there a man call in his soul there a man call of a holy trust that is there a man the fruits of faith people, in the vision the foundation of allied institutions, violence infinitely may send down a heap of sense bright, beautiful faith. increase with the of the strength

treasures of the father. When, we reply, is this cumulative power of succeeding generations better felt seen and experienced than in the growth of piety, products of goodness and peace, and even the hereditary force of true religion and faith in God? It worth something to be predisposed to good or less posed to evil. And what else have we in the inciation of that tremendous law of the propagation our race—a law scientifically demonstrated and tested without dispute in universal experience:—visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments?" Shall it not be a law as well to preserve and cherish holiness? What hope have we of the conversion of the world to Christ, if not in the hereditary developments of religion and the cumulative social power of goodness. The first Adam gave us the breeding taint of sin: the second Adam touches us with the spreading virtue of healing and cure. Let praise Him forever. It is true, the son gets more from the father than his money—he gets more or less his character and spirit. This generation is better for the virtue of the generation that preceded it. The moral and spiritual activities of this time are livelier and mightier because of the moral and religious life and power of the last generation. And we to-day are inciting or deadening the faith of the men yet to be.

From generation to generation—yes, and from faith to faith. As learning increases, as the world rolls on as we do our duty, does faith in God and Jesus Christ.

Again, they say the economies, the government administrations, have to do with the advancement of learning and the accumulation of wealth. It was to learn under the Ptolemies. Art flourished under Pericles, and poetry and eloquence under Mæcenas. Riches increased under Solomon, and literature grew apace under Queen Elizabeth. "From glory to glory." Circumstances were favorable, chances good, possessions secure; and so treasures grew and multiplied from the lamb on the hillside, and the shop by the way, to the golden temple with its vessels of gold. Prince and patronage was bestowed, royal munificence conferred, till the dim light of the dawning flushed up into the through radiance after radiance to the royal splendor of the noon. "That is all natural. We understand that. A better government, a favoring prince, a prime minister encouraged learning, fostered and rewarded industry, and opened the sources of wealth. From learning to learning; from wealth to wealth. Government administration did that. But what was that to do with faith?" And yet is not that the very thing the Apostle is speaking of? "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The Jew was to have the first offer, for he had had the offer all along; the first offer under the new economy or dispensation, because his old economy had not in it half the opportunities and possibilities of the new. God was not unjust to

—yes, and from faith from the old and deny him the new; for the
as the world rolls on for the masses under the new, whatever might
in God and Jesus Christ in a few special cases, was impossible to the
es, the governments under the old. It is said the Holy Ghost was
th the advancement given, for Jesus was not yet glorified. Economy
of wealth. It was a question has to do with it much every way. Men
Art flourished under this in worldly matters; why must faith and
quence under Meccan, in our thoughtlessness and misconceptions, be
n, and literature and outside every divine and human law and pro-
"From glory to glory? Why must the devil be given such a vantage
ances good, possessed? There has been faith in every dispensation,
nd multiplied from faith has been advancing in sweep, effort and
pp by the way, through all the dispensations; but never before
s of gold. Prince had the scope or chance of this era, or been
munificence conferred to the labors it can now accomplish and the
ning flushed up what it can now achieve. "From faith to faith."
to the royal splendour of the prophetic age had higher ground than
ral. We understand faith of the oracular and apparitional ages. The
favoring prince of the Christian Church has broader sweep,
ing, fostered and deeper cleavage, and higher attainment than the
e sources of wealth of the Jewish Church. Did not our Saviour so
wealth to wealth?—"Of all that are born of woman there hath
that. But what has arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he
is not that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than
"To the Jew first. What else meant the Apostle?—"The mystery of
w was to have first, which in other ages was not made known unto
all along; the fountains of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy
dispensation, because of the Spirit, that the Gentiles
the opportunities should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and par-
not unjust to ours of his promise in Christ by the gospel . . . and

to make *all* men see what is the fellowship of mystery which from the beginning of the world been hid in God, who created all things by Christ, to the intent that *now* unto the principal and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." From economy to economy; from dispensation to dispensation; from faith to faith: "To the Jew first, and to the Greek."

Does spiritual knowledge assist faith? "The more of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power unto us-ward *who believe*, according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places; and gave Him to be the head over all to the Church, which is His body. This is the dispensation of the Spirit, wherein we advance from knowledge to knowledge and changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. More easily than in former times can we exercise faith in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit—Triune God. There is more in the world to help exercise faith, and there is more for his faith to be exercised to act upon. More of the power of mutual, social, combined and corporate faith is felt, and the economy when royal bounty and princely munificence of grace lend every encouragement to faith in God."

the fellowship of the era of a missionary faith—a mighty personal
 ing of the world in consecration and full salvation; and then the
 all things by al, combined and corporate faith going forth to
 into the principal conquest of the world. "From faith to faith."
 might be made known a faith in the being of a God and the inspira-
 dom of God." If Scriptures? Devils have that. Bad men, yea,
 sensation to dispute the worst men, have that. Merely a faith in the
 the Jew first, and we acts of God and His moral government of the
 ? Devils have that and the worst of men.
 ist faith? "They a faith in the providence of God and the
 lightened, that yeety of the Christian religion? Devils have that
 calling, and what the wickedest and vilest of men. And yet they
 rritance in the sa Only believe; only believe, and you are saved."
 less of His power ve what? There are a thousand beliefs before
 the working of come to salvation, and a thousand altitudes of
 t in Christ when after you are saved. "Faith to faith." We
 set Him at His onward from faith to faith in our personal
 s; and gave Him ience. Faith in the being of a God—His moral
 n, which is His bocter, law and government, our moral relation and
 e Spirit, wherein; which faiths may lead us to repentance;—then
 knowledge and in Christ the Saviour, which brings salvation;—
 by the Spirit of faith in the Spirit and His work, which, with the
 ner times can a in the Father and the Son, and not separated
 and the Holy Sp it, on the one side, or a life of holy obedience on
 the world to help ther, brings holiness, entire sanctification,—yea, is
 e for his faith w ess, the antepast of heaven. And we are not yet
 ne power of mut But onward from faith to faith. Now the faith
 th is felt, and the secures the baptism of power; then the faith that
 and princely mu s the flame descending on me with the flame
 ment to faith in G ending on my brother Christian, that, as rich men

unite their wealth and learned men their knowledge, so we in Jesus' name unite our consecration, love and power, our energy, wisdom and money, and go forth to the conquest of the world. This is the missionary faith, and this the era for the missionary faith. But where is it in the Church at home? How few are scattered the tapers glimmering through the darkness in the heathen lands abroad!

Such gradations of faith, such sad defects and such majestic triumphs are distinctly recognized in the Word of God. "Thou believest there is one God: thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble." "I will hide my face from them, for they are a froward generation, children in whom is no faith." On the sea Christ said unto them, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" On the grassy hillside He said: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall He clothe you, O ye of little faith?" "Him that is weak in faith receive ye," said Paul, "but not to doubtful disputations." The same Apostle describing Abraham says: "Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead . . . He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Stephen is described as a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and Barnabas as a good man and full of faith. Our Lord exhorted to a faith of the hardihood and efficiency of a grain of mustard seed; nor did He rebuke or undertake to correct His disciples when they

their knowledge, "Lord, increase our faith." A "faith to be
 ration, love and "is spoken of; a "faith that made whole," and
 , and go forth "faith that saved." Our Lord prayed for Peter that
 the missionary "faith fail not; said to the Syrophenician, "O woman,
 ary faith. But "it is thy faith;" and of the Roman Centurion, "I
 How few are not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Paul
 ough the dimarks of the measure of faith and proportion of faith;
 Jesus threw men upon their own act and attain-
 effects and sucnt by the combined instruction and injunction,
 gnized in th according to your faith be it unto you." We are to
 one God: tho in faith, nothing wavering: and we ask and receive
 tremble." "because we ask to consume on our lusts, thus
 are a frowardestroying our own confidence that we are asking
 ith." On the according to His will, and then He heareth us. And
 ve so fearful all through, the Holy Scriptures put faith as a
 e grassy hillculty as much as sight or hearing, for whose exercise
 the the grass e are responsible, whose energies we can cultivate
 w is cast into d direct, whose powers enlarge and whose benefits
 you, O ye of cure. Moreover, they set faith before us as, on the
 receive ye, orthward side of religion, our mightiest, grandest
 tions." The culty; and inasmuch as it has God for its object,
 "Being not d not trees or stones, and fastens upon God, and
 ly now dead eeps up the communication with God, it brings divine
 od through ower and goodness and riches and love to our help.
 ry to God." Will our earthly faculties in their exercise bring us
 th and the strength or wealth or learning? This spiritual, heavenly
 nd full of and divine faculty brings to us what is of infinitely
 hardihood more value, and with infinitely more certainty. Can
 or did He you tell me, then, why we live and think in the realm
 when they

of sense? Why there is our chief knowledge, our possessions, our chief joy? Sordid! Sordid! Earth Sensual! Sin hath blinded our minds, alienated affections from God, darkened our understanding, hardened our hearts.



FAITH.

f knowledge, our
lid ! Sordid ! Earth
minds, alienated
r understanding.

III.

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE.

BY REV. I. B. AYLESWORTH, LL.D.,

Mount Forest.

to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in
ly places might be known by the church the manifold
m of God, according to the eternal purpose which he pur-
in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. iii. 10, 11.

THIS passage gives a clear and definite statement
of the purpose of God in human redemption.
is peculiar in this, that in no other book and by
other author can a similar passage be found. The
ning of the passage is very plain, and it is quite
ent that Paul intended to convey the thought
ch the passage expresses. For various reasons,
was more competent than any other man to impart
information. He received his knowledge of the
pel history and doctrine directly from the Lord
us. He was selected by the Lord for his special
stolic work, because of his eminent ability and
ifications of head and heart. He was born into
s world about five or ten years too late, or he
uld have been one of the original apostles (1 Cor.

xv. 8). When he wrote this Epistle he had thirty years in the service of Christ and the of the ministry. He had been caught up into third heaven; saw and heard unutterable things; was permitted to return to earth. He wrote inspiration of God, and from matured experience enlarged knowledge, according to the superior wisdom given unto him. In this passage, which contains central idea of this Epistle, he seems to grasp very thought of God, and discloses "His eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The many controversies and theories concerning the atonement arise from not looking at the subject in connection with its completed work, so far as it can be known. It has generally been regarded as an afterthought with God; that after man fell into sin, God taxed the Divine wisdom to devise a means for man's rescue. The true idea seems to be rather to regard the atonement as a principle and purpose always existing in the mind of God. Therefore, just as the fact of the Trinity, as well as the entire nature and attributes of Deity, are eternal, so is the atonement; so that when man fell, the remedy was antecedent and present, suited to his necessity. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, . . . being predestinated according to the purpose of His own will" (Eph. i. 9, 11). "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the

Epistle he had "The knowledge of the world hath been hid in God, who Christ and the Father hath revealed all things by Christ Jesus" (Eph. iii. 9). "For- caught up into heaven as ye know that ye were not redeemed with mutterable things, but with the imperishable things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times" (1 Peter i. 18-20).

He wrote "The Gospel, which contains the revelation of the superior wisdom of God, seems to grasp the eternal purpose, therefore, as the atonement existed before the Gospel, the Gospel does not produce the atonement, but the atonement produces the Gospel. The Gospel is the revelation of the atonement, and the atonement is the revelation of the Gospel. The Gospel theories concerning the atonement are the revelation 'in these last times' of that which was revealed before."

Looking at the subject from another point of view, so far as the atonement is concerned, and according to this view, the atonement was regarded as an atonement made for man, but man was made for the atonement. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained before that we should walk in them." "Inasmuch as ye are His workmanship, ye also are builded together for a habitation in glory: in which the fact of the atonement is revealed through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 10, 22).

Therefore, man, therefore, was created in Christ Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, "to the intent that unto the principalities and the powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." (R.V.) That is, to the intent that through the Church—through redeemed humanity—God could make such a revelation of Himself as was not made in the creation. This is the purpose of the creation and the redemption of man.

We are to regard the ultimate purpose of the at-
ment, therefore, as an effort on the part of the invisible
God to make Himself known. There was a period
when the Godhead existed alone. For Jesus is believed
all things; so that there was a time when all things
were not. The first thing necessary on His part
make known His existence and nature, was to create
intelligent beings to whom he could reveal Himself.
For this purpose, first in order He created the angels
and all the hosts of them. The terms "principalities
and "powers in heavenly places" are descriptive of the
angels and their various degrees and powers. The
angels are numerous, brilliant, powerful and wise.
Daniel and John saw thousands upon thousands, yet
ten thousand times ten thousand. John saw a mighty
angel clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon
his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet
as pillars of fire. In one night, one angel of the Lord
"smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four-
score and five thousand: and when they arose early in
the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." The
angel Gabriel was full of wisdom and power, and un-
folded to Daniel many intricate problems of the
future. It is to such intelligent principalities and
powers as these that God proposed to make known His
manifold wisdom by the Church.

As to the process of the formation of the different
orders of angels we are not informed. When He
framed the world, He spake and it was done, He com-
manded and it stood fast. When He commanded

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to shine out of darkness, He said, Let there be
and there was light. When He made man, He
Come, let us make man; and he formed him out
e dust of the ground, and breathed in his nostrils
breath of life, and man became a living soul.
n He brought the principalities and powers in the
venly worlds into existence, He said, Let there be
els, and throughout the vast eternal realms myriads
hosts of sons of God sprang into existence.
hese heavenly intelligences manifest a deep interest
all the works of God. When the morning stars
g together, all the sons of God shouted for joy.
en the babe was born in Bethlehem, a multitude of
heavenly host were heard "praising God, and say-
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace
d good-will toward men." They attended Jesus
ile on earth continually, and at any time He could
mmon twelve legions of them to His aid. They
ere the first to announce His resurrection, and a cloud
them accompanied Him when He ascended into the
ghest heavens, saying, "Lift up your heads, ye ever-
sting gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
nd the King of glory shall come in." They desire to
penetrate the profoundest depths of the purpose of
od in atonement, and there is likewise joy in heaven,
n the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner
hat repenteth.

Having, then, first produced these mighty intelli-
gences, He begins the process of unfolding to them His
manifold wisdom. His purpose is not merely to reveal

the fact of His existence, nature and attributes, but manifold wisdom. God knows deep and wonderful and glorious truths. He wishes to communicate wisdom to the universe. As it is written, they shall all be taught of God. His word is truth—truth revealed from the mind of God. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, . . . not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The word "manifold" means "exceedingly various," "multiform, immense, infinite."

His multiform wisdom is displayed in the exhaustless variety in creation, both animate, inanimate, and intellectual. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. The works of the Lord are great, sought out by all those that have pleasure therein. There is great variety in the heavenly bodies—star differeth from star in glory. There is endless variety in plants and animals. Man is the climax of the material creation, is different and superior to all the rest. There seems also to be a difference between the nature of angels and the nature of men. It is said that Jesus took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abram. Man's nature differs from and is superior to angels in this, that by the power to love he is made in the exact image of God, and by the same power man can not only know more of God than angels can, but man can—and he is the only being who can—know the very essence of Deity. When Jesus came, He came to

attributes, but His own, to those of His own nature. Man with
 ep and wonderous begins a little lower than the angels, and with
 communicate from arises high above and beyond them, even into the
 written, they share the bosom of God. "Father, I will that they also whom
 is truth—truth thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they
 "We speak that they behold My glory." Unto none of the angels was
 . . . not in that which is ever said.

In addition to creation, His manifold wisdom is also
 manifold "manifest in the care He exercises over all. The minutest
 immense, in the atoms of creation are kept in being by His power. He
 gives life and breath to all things. He sends the rain,
 and tempers the wind and the light. He keeps the earth
 revolving at its proper speed. He upholds the sun,
 and controls the motions of the mighty orbs and
 countless myriads of constellations in the infinite
 depths of space. He tells the number thereof and
 calls them all by name. In addition to all this, He rules
 angels, commands devils, and receives the worship and
 adoration of the universe. "Let everything that hath
 breath praise Him." He conceived salvation for the
 guilty, and with infinite skill and tenderness so applies
 it as to save and not destroy the sinner. "The smok-
 ing flax He will not quench." He dies on Calvary, and
 at the same time upholds and rules the vast universe
 of mind and matter. "O the depths of the riches, both
 of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

He began the process of manifesting His invisible
 nature and existence by creating the visible universe.

By the material creation only part of His nature
 could be revealed. "For the invisible things of Him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, be understood by the things that are made, even eternal power and Godhead." That is, the material creation teaches the personality, the power, wisdom and eternity of God.

When He made man in His own image and likeness and man became a living soul, having a spiritual, intellectual, and moral nature, there was by man a still farther revelation of the fact that God is a Spirit. "Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, having a spiritual nature, we ought not to think that the Godhead" is a material or an impersonal Being, but that He is a spiritual and personal God (Acts xvii. 29.)

There was a still farther unfolding of the mystery of the Godhead when Christ came into the world. Now, for the first time, there is a clear and definite revelation of the Trinity. Previous to this, the plurality and even the trinity of persons could be inferred, but now, in Christ Jesus, it can be definitely established. "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This truth could not have been known, even by the heavenly principalities and powers, had it not been revealed. It pleased God to reveal the Trinity through His efforts to save man. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant unto you, according to His riches

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ory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit
e inner man" (Eph. iii. 14-16). There is a revelation
e Trinity in Christian experience, and the New
ament abounds with such teaching.

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h Jesus Christ also is the revelation of the wonder-
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ely in the sense that He is supremely good; that
is the source of all existence; that like an earthly
ent He is full of compassion and pity for His
dren; that He created our first parents; but in
literal sense that "we are all His offspring." The
t may have sung better than he knew, but he sung
truth. "We had fathers in the flesh that corrected
and we did them reverence; how much rather be
subjection to the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live."

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The created part of our nature, including as much of
r intelligence as is akin to that of the animal
eation, which is of the earth earthy, we derived from
r human parents. This is called the flesh, to which
aul refers when he says, "The creature was made sub-
ct to vanity not willingly, but by reason of Him who
bjected the same in hope." That is, the flesh was
ade subject to infirmity, suffering and death. "For
this we groan being burdened." The "creature,"
ccording to the original, and as translated by Dr.
Whedon, means the "created," that is, the created
art of our nature; that is, the part of our nature
hich we derive from him who was created out of the
ust of the ground. But the same Trinity who breathed
spiritual nature in the first man is the direct author

of the moral nature in all men. "Howbeit, that not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual."

Each individual soul being the direct offspring of God, partakes of the very nature of God. As atonement always exists, each soul comes into existence under the blessing of its benefits. Jesus is "that light which lighteth every one coming into the world." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Those who do not retain this condition of purity may be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created them." That is, they can be restored to that condition of purity in which they originally came into existence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If God is the direct author of any part of our being, that part of us must be sinless in its origin. If there is original depravity in us it must inhere in that part of us which comes by nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "In sin did my mother conceive me." If the first man, Adam, who is dead can communicate defilement or guilt to the generations born centuries after his death, how much more can the last Adam, who is the living Christ, and a quickening spirit, and ever liveth to give life, how much more shall He save to the uttermost every child of Adam unless He is wilfully rejected. If there is original guilt, much more is there original righteousness. The Gospel, therefore, reveals the Fatherhood of God, because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of all the souls whom Jesus came to

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m. In Christ, also, is the still farther embodi-
of the holiness and goodness of God. Jesus
self came to show us the Father. "The only
ten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He
declared Him." "He that seeth Me seeth the
er also." Jesus could not reveal God without
alizing holiness, for God is holy. He that seeth
seeth holiness. This is the reason why the Jews
all others reject Christ. They do not want holi-
and deliberately shun or reject it.

a connection with holiness is also the revelation of
Where holiness repels, love draws. "No man
come unto Me, except the Father who sent Me
w him." "We love Him because He first loved

The coming of Christ into the world is an expression
of the Divine love. "Herein is love, not that we loved
d, but that God loved us and gave His Son to be a
pitation for our sins."

The character which Jesus presented to the compre-
ension of men was God manifested in the flesh. He
is perfectly pure and without guile. He loved the
world and suffered to save it. He forgave His enemies
d prayed for His murderers. He was intensely
xious for the well-being of all men, and "He shall
e of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." His
eath was a manifestation of God's "great love where-
ith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin."

Therefore, Jesus Christ in His own person revealed
to men and to angels the very central essence of the

Divine nature. It will be readily seen that the revelation of Himself could not be made by creation alone. We must, therefore, contemplate the atonement in this light. Creation reveals the existence and attributes of God. The Gospel of Christ reveals the nature and essence of God.

The most wonderful unfolding of the manifold wisdom of God is shown by the Church. God communicates His nature to man through Jesus Christ, who is the Head of that body called the Church. As Christ was the manifestation of God in the world, so are we "Ye are the light of the world." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." These spiritual graces in us reveal the nature of God. The infinite wisdom of God is seen in this, that the very worst moral characters, even the chief of sinners, are transformed into the very likeness of God. Those who by nature are fit only for perdition are by grace made meet for heaven. Even we ourselves have experienced the love, joy and peace, and do rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Added to this, the resurrection of the body by which "death is swallowed up in life," as darkness is swallowed up of light, and Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, and plotted the destruction of our first parents by the first temptation, is defeated, and the results of his malice redound to the glory of God and the salvation of men.

The manifold wisdom of God is very clearly seen in all human history. All the nations of the earth, from

ily seen that the beginning, have been moulded and fashioned by the hand of God, according to His will and purpose, as made by creat clay in the hands of the potter, "to make all (the contemplate the universe) see what is the fellowship (the compacted reveals the existence of Christ revelation) of the mystery, which was hidden from of Christ revelation by God" (*Wesley*), "who created all things by the manifold wisdom of Christ" (Eph. iii. 9).

God communion. But the full and complete unfolding of the Divine us Christ, who wisdom by the Church will not be fully realized until urch. As Christ the myriads of earth's redeemed shall be glorified. world, so are we Whom He justified, them He also glorified." "It doth The fruit of the yet appear what we shall be." "The righteous ing, gentleness shall shine forth as the sun in the glory of their es in us revelation ther." They shall sit with Jesus on His throne; they dom of God in all appear with Him in glory, and be like Him, and al characters with Him forever.

d into the very The wisdom of God means more than what we call re are fit only intelligence; it means love. Men show their intelli- et for heaven nce by writing books, by building temples, by cun- love, joy and ing inventions, or by skilful actions. But by none of y of God. these methods can love be made known. Love body by which cannot be known by any definition of it. It can tness is swal- nly be known by its living realization. The elect of a murderer God are living epistles, read and known of all men. action of our Ye are God's book; ye are God's building; ye are the efeated, and temple of the living God, each one a lively stone in lory of God the habitation of God through the Spirit.

ly seen in It is through this living temple, the Church, that arth, from the essence of God is known to the inhabitants of the universe. The fellowship of the saints represents the

sweet fellowship of the adorable Trinity, which is the fellowship of love. The material universe declares the glory of the great and mighty God. The angels declare His goodness and His holiness. At one time we hear them shouting down to earth, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will toward men. At another time they are "crying one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." But man, redeemed, and resting with Christ in the bosom of God, is permitted to shout back to the wondering angels, "Alleluia," "God is love."

The knowledge we acquire of created things amounts to very little. There is a wide gulf between knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom is the principal thing. Knowledge is the information we acquire concerning any person, place, or object. Wisdom is a truth or an impulse communicated unto us from an intelligent person. Take as an illustration St. Paul's Cathedral. If you study it for years, and learn all about its material, and get the very conception of its great architect, Christopher Wren, what have you? Very little. Now listen to one of the Church's profoundest modern thinkers and polished orators, Canon Liddon, and what have you? Thoughts that breathe and words that burn. The stones of the building are thoughtless and dumb, but the tones of the classic divine are full of life and wisdom.

Go now to Nature and she cannot speak. There is no wisdom or thought in her. She is dead, inert, senseless. What are the wild waves saying? No-

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ing; no more than the clattering of jarring rocks.
 at are the sighing winds saying? Nothing; no
 re than the drifting sand. "Though I have know-
 ge of all mysteries, and could prophesy, and talk
 h the charming eloquence of an angel, and lack
 dom, I have nothing." "But where shall wisdom
 found? and where is the place of understanding?
 n knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found
 the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not
 me; and the sea saith, It is not with me" (Job xxviii.
 -14.) Will the Book of books answer the question?
 es. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God,
 at giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,
 and it shall be given him" (James i. 5).
 What is this wisdom? It is love. There is a know-
 edge by love, and this is the highest, purest, sweetest
 knowledge of all. "The greatest of these is love."
 Mr. Beecher uses the phrase, "love-knowledge." It is
 knowledge by the highest faculty of the soul. It is
 knowledge of the highest Being in the universe. It
 is given unto us by God Himself, by whom we are
 filled with the fulness of God. "For that God who
 commanded light to shine out of darkness hath shined
 into our hearts to give unto us the light of the know-
 ledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
 Those who do not love God are not known of God,
 and do not know God. Hence the terrible revelation
 in the last great day, "Depart from me; . . . I never
 knew you."

Here in this life we see through a glass darkly.

Our love-knowledge is dwarfed by intellectual ideas. In the other life we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. We shall know by love, without any intellectual efforts or limitations. Then by the blissful fellowship of love, the wisest, purest and greatest shall be diffused through the whole, and every soul which is the candle of the Lord will reflect a flood of glory and wisdom. Of this holy temple of the Church triumphant God Himself shall be the light, and when each one shall "be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God," then shall be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places. "And now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout the endless duration of the eternities. Amen."



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IV.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

BY REV. WESLEY CASSON,

Mitchell.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."—
COR. v. 17.

THE gospel is the last and most perfect of the dispensations. It is pre-eminently the dispensation of the Spirit ; the economy under which He is poured out in all His Christian fulness on mankind.

In the gospel, the ancient types have realized their fulfilment. It is the meridian brightness of the sun succeeding the dim gray of the morning. It is the religion of past ages in its completed and developed form. It draws aside the curtain of the hitherto unseen, and arraying itself in the majesty of truth it unfolds to us the mind and will of God. It explains the great problem of our existence here, and points out the path by which we may obtain eternal life. It is a finished revelation, making known to us all that which on earth we need to know, and giving

us a bright glimpse of the blessedness of the future to be enjoyed by the Christian in the eternal world.

But while the gospel is a dispensation of light while it scatters the darkness in which for ages man has been enveloped, and pours a flood of illumination on his understanding and conscience, in its nature and design it is eminently spiritual. In this respect it surpasses and presents something like a contrast to the Jewish system. That consisted for the most part in rites and ordinances, temporary in their character, limited in their design, and which could never make the comers thereunto perfect. It consisted of duties and observances in which the service of the body was to a great extent enlisted. These services, though burdensome, were grandly imposing, commanding the attention and enlisting the sympathies of the Jewish people. In contrast with this, the gospel is clothed with simplicity. Christianity enjoins no gorgeous rites, no imposing ritual, no sacerdotal splendor, no localised temple, like the one at Jerusalem, specially sacred. It simply announces to us the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, and exhibits a risen and exalted Christ as the only hope of a world of sinners. The great purpose of the gospel is to make man holy as God is holy; to raise him from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; to purify and ennoble his nature, by bringing him under the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God. In this respect the gospel is superior to all other dispensations, and is invested with a dignity and accompanied

with a power to which preceding economies can lay claim.

Now, the great error into which the Jewish people fell, more particularly in the time of our Lord, was formalism—the service of the lip, a busy round of external duties, without the love and homage of the heart. Convinced as they were that the law was given by God, and that the institutions to which they were attached were divine, they relied on attention to certain ceremonies as though they were sufficient of themselves to release them from the great duty of loving God with all their heart and their neighbors as themselves. And under the Christian dispensation, although in its whole scope and design it is adapted to lead men from the shadow to the substance, from the letter to the spirit, from the form to the power of a living faith,—even under this system, simple as its teaching, there are many who ignore or utterly overlook its spiritual purpose and aim. Believing firmly the gospel as a revelation from God, they cordially accept its doctrines, and to some extent submit to its requirements, but they neglect to secure that great spiritual change without which the entire assent of the understanding is vain. They observe the Lord's day with scrupulous exactness, attend the house of God, and feel a rejoicing interest in the spread of Christian truth, and yet they strangely overlook the necessity of the new birth and the possession of a personal salvation. In these days of vaunted culture and educational development we must rigidly adhere

to the uncompromising teaching of the divine Word. The New Testament insists upon inward religion. Mere trust in God's mercy is insufficient; a formal profession will not avail; religious duties, however excellent, will not be acceptable in the place of vital piety. "Ye must be born again." Man cannot grow good. There is no latent principle in the human heart that can be developed into religious life. A divine change is necessary. "Ye must be born again." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." In our text the same truth is taught, and we are furnished with a test by which we may ascertain our spiritual position: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." We will confine our meditations more particularly to the phrase "in Christ" as being descriptive of the exalted privilege and position of the renewed Christian.

There are three expressions used in the New Testament descriptive of the character and condition of all mankind. Under these three terms the whole human race on earth, in heaven, and hell are included. They are "*without Christ*," "*in Christ*," and "*with Christ*." To be without Christ is to be in a state of nature, unrenewed and unsaved; in danger of "the wrath to come." To be in Christ, is to be in a state of grace—to have our sins pardoned, our natures renewed, and to enjoy a blessed hope of eternal life; and to be with Christ is the distinguished blessedness of the redeemed

out of all nations, who, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, now stand before His throne in glory everlasting. Nature, grace, glory, are wrapped up and embodied in the terms, *without, in and with Christ*. Our text refers to the second state, the state of grace. "If any man be in Christ." If we examine the Epistles of St. Paul we find that he frequently uses the term "in Christ," and the expression is generally accompanied with an emphasis so deeply impressive in the statement where it occurs, as to convince us that it contains a depth of meaning which we are liable to overlook.

To live in the enjoyment of the privilege it describes is indeed an unspeakable blessing, as it has connected with it present good, and the prospect of future glory. Our Lord exhorts His disciples to abide in Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you." And as the result of such union He promises all spiritual blessings as their heritage. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Ye shall ask what ye will, but this royal promise is contingent upon union with Himself.

The Apostle Paul also beautifully describes the privilege and happy position of the man who is in Christ. He takes a most exalted estimate of this divine relationship. We infer this from several striking passages scattered through his epistles. For example, in the concluding part of his letter to the Romans he mentions by name several persons who lived in the imperial city, who were of note among the

Apostles, and sending to them his kind remembrances as a Christian and a gentleman, he thus salutes them, "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who also were in Christ before me." What do we infer from this? We consider that in the Apostle's estimation this union with Christ was the highest honor that could be conferred upon them, and while he congratulated them upon this very account, it would seem to imply something like regret on his own. They were "in Christ," in the enjoyment of His favor, telling of the sweetness of salvation to those around them, when he as a bigoted Jew was scornfully repudiating it. "Who also were in Christ before me," as if he had said, "Happy are ye, my kinsmen, my fellow-prisoners, for earlier than myself ye were placed in the possession of that blessing which ever since I enjoyed has been the strength, the delight, and the glory of my soul." The highest honor he could associate with their names was that they were privileged to be in Christ before himself.

Further, if we review St. Paul's history as a man, we find none called to renounce more advantages, or to suffer greater persecution through attachment to Christ. Consider his position. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was well versed in the literature of his country. By education and habit he was fondly attached to the law of his fathers, and the chief priests and dignitaries of his nation reposed the utmost confidence in his judgment and zeal. His clear and vigorous mind, his logical skill, and earnestness of

purpose, all conspired to raise him above his compeers for ecclesiastical or literary fame. A lofty career of ambition opened before him. Was he not the defender of the ancient faith, the champion of the law, the pride and glory of his nation? and did not the highest and most coveted honors of the Jewish Commonwealth await his acceptance as the reward of his zeal in trampling out the pestilent heresy of the hated Nazarene? But see him with relentless heart and tearless eye on his way to Damascus. Struck down by a light brighter than the sun, his proud heart is subdued and changed. What is the result? He renounces these glittering advantages. The applause of his countrymen ceases to charm. He braves the scorn of the men who for years had been accustomed to pay him reverence. He tramples their tempting honors under his feet, and counts them but dross and dung. Why? What is the reason of this marvellous change? Listen to him. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found *in Him*." That was the grand impelling motive—to be found in Christ. This repaid him for all his sacrifices. This led him to renounce all that was formerly dear to him, dimmed the glory of all worldly honors, and made the most dazzling earthly scenes appear dull, empty, evanescent as the summer cloud. "That I may

win Christ, and be found in Him." It was an act of the truest wisdom on the part of the apostle, for in renouncing the perishing honors of earth he gained for himself an undecaying treasure in the skies. He won the crown of life that will never fade away, and covered himself with a glory that will never wane, and as a prince among the countless hosts of heaven he will be honored and revered for evermore. The key to his conduct, the reason why he renounced and suffered so much, was that he might win Christ and be found in Him.

Take another illustration. From one of his Corinthian epistles we learn that the Apostle was favored with a celestial vision. He was caught up into the third heaven, the paradise of saints, the home of angels and of God. He there beheld the spirits of just men made perfect, the glorious company of the redeemed encircling in a zone of beauty the eternal throne. He saw them in all their dazzling brightness, listened to their sweet songs of joy, and what he saw and heard was impossible for him to reveal to mortal ears. They were "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." The remembrance of that bright vision never passed away, and fourteen years afterwards he mentions it to the Church.

He speaks of this event in his own history, but in his humility as a Christian he speaks of the vision as though some other man had beheld it. Now what description does he give of the favored individual who had the singular privilege of a glimpse of the glories

of heaven? What does he say about him? "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth." It was a man in Christ who was thus favored. None but a spiritual character, "a man in Christ," could have sympathy with spiritual scenes, or any enjoyment amid the pure worship of the saints above. Their hallelujahs, their sublime praises, would call forth no response from breasts incrustated with worldliness and sin. To the sinner even now the contemplation of heaven is not an attractive theme, but in the presence of its effulgent glory he would be stricken and confounded. An unspiritual man would find a paradise anywhere rather than in paradise. It was "a man in Christ." Does not this suggest to us most impressively the necessity of being in Christ on earth before we can be "with Christ" in heaven—the necessity of a divine change here before we can be qualified for the inheritance of the saints hereafter. Believe it, my hearers. Without this union with Christ there can be no peace, no salvation, no heaven. All the blessings of grace in this life, and the fruition of glory in the life to come, will only be bestowed on those who are in Christ. How important the question, Are you in Christ? Are you trusting in His merits for acceptance and salvation? Can you testify to the renewing energy of His spirit, and the cleansing efficacy of his blood? I do not ask you whether you believe the Scriptures, or admire and venerate the sublime doctrines they contain. There are many who admire

the gospel who remain utter strangers to its transforming power. There are many whose sensibilities can be awakened—whose souls glow with enthusiasm or melt into tenderness over the sweet story of the cross. Their eyes would flash with indignation, and they would shrink with instinctive horror from the man who would impugn the authority of this blessed book, but with all this correctness of moral feeling, this appreciation of what is true and good, there may be no union with the Saviour.

Many have gone down to the very gates of perdition admiring the exquisite harmony of the divine perfections as displayed in the economy of redemption, but who have discovered just too late that they have neglected it as a means of salvation for themselves.

The question, then, is not one respecting your sentiments, or doctrinal opinions, or sacrifices for the Church, but what is the state of your heart towards God! Are you in Christ, consciously accepted and saved? If so, happy are you. Your privileges are higher, and your blessedness greater than if the treasures of creation were laid at your feet. The cloud of the Divine anger is rolled away, and cloudless and beautiful is the sky that bends over you.

Listen once more to the triumphant language of the Apostle: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Wonderful words! No condemnation—that is removed; no guilt—that is cancelled: fear gives place to love, distrust to filial confidence. God, the great God who formed the

earth, and built the skies, and upholds the Universe by His power,—this awful God is ours, is mine—my Father, my Friend, my light, and my salvation; and conscience, which before accused, is tranquilized in the blood of the Lamb. “No condemnation”—but it is the privilege of those only who are “in Christ Jesus.” Oh, how great is the blessedness of the renewed Christian! All the treasures of the new and better covenant are secured to the believer—blessings temporal and spiritual—blessings adapted to all the circumstances of life, and the brightest hopes to cheer us when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death—blessings that will abound amid the changing scenes of time, and the more exalted blessings of the heavenly state that will be our portion and inheritance for ever. What God has prepared for His people in heaven we cannot tell. An impenetrable veil hides from our gaze the happiness of the redeemed. Human eye has never beheld, nor human tongue described the joys which Jesus’ ransomed ones know in the paradise of God. Believers have sometimes, in a rapture of devotion, caught a glimpse of its glory, and heard snatches of its songs; but the full revelation is reserved for eternity to unfold. We cannot lift the veil. We must die to know what God has prepared for them that love Him.

But the life of the Christian on earth, we know something of that. How great his privileges! How soothing his consolations! No proper estimate can be made of them. The Christian has the promise

of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Prayer with its answered blessings, hope with its bright anticipations, faith with its realizing sweetness, praise with all its rapture, and then, as the consummation, heaven with all its untold and priceless glory, will be the inheritance of the man who is in Christ.

No marvel is it that St. Paul, speaking of the fulness of the Christian's privilege, and the completeness of that salvation which results from union with Christ, addressing believers, says, "*Ye are complete in him.*" Complete in Christ! He is the author and will be the finisher of our faith.

His merit is the procuring cause of our salvation, His atonement is the basis of our hope; and clothed in the righteousness of faith we stand accepted in the sight of heaven. We are "*complete in Him.*" We need no other Saviour. In Him there is sufficient, saving, sovereign grace. Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, our all and in all, and relying on the power of His arm, and reposing in the strength of His love, we trust to be saved for ever. We are in Christ, and Christ dwells in us, and by virtue of this union we are raised to the very pinnacle of human dignity and human blessedness, and are but a little lower than the angels.

We are complete in Him! "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." On this part of the subject I shall only make a few observations.

As a result of this union there will necessarily be a

corresponding change. The change is a real one. It is equivalent to a new creation.

It is not the beautifying of the old, but the implantation of a new nature. Whatever virtues a man may exhibit, unless he be renewed by grace divine, they only resemble the fragrant flowers which you may sometimes see scattered round a corrupting corpse. They may veil the terror and deformity of death, and throw a transient beauty round the scene, but death is still there. The communication of life is necessary before that inanimate form could resume the functions of life. The language of Scripture indicates how great must be this spiritual change. It is represented as being "born again," passing from death to life—a new creation. Had you seen the glazed eyes and stiffened form of the widow's son turned out to burial; and, mingling with the procession, had you beheld him raised at the majestic bidding of Him who is the "Resurrection and the Life," you would have been struck with astonishment at the stupendous results. Now the change effected by the Divine Spirit in the heart of the penitent believer is quite as great, though not so perceptible to the human eye. It is a change effected not on matter but on spirit, and as much superior as spirit is to matter. So the raising of a soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness is a mightier work than the raising of the dead, for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature."

Further, this wondrous change, this new life, does not affect the individuality of the human mind, or

destroy that mental diversity which exists among men, giving to every man a character peculiarly his own. Variety is one of the elements of perfection. It marks the kingdom of grace as well as of nature. All Christians bear the family likeness. They have the mind of Christ, the image of the Father; the moral resemblance will be the same in all cases, but there will be a diversity of taste and pursuit, leading each one to select an appropriate sphere in which he can be most useful in the vineyard of the Lord. The grace of God could never change a Wesley into a Whitfield, nor bend the rough and rugged Luther into the gentleness of Melancthon. But being new creatures in Christ Jesus, these mighty men dedicated their varied powers to the glory of God and the service of His Church. In the ministry of to-day this unity of purpose combined with diversity of gifts was never more strikingly seen.

One can shoot the arrow, another can heal the wound. . One adapted to convince, another to persuade men. One can thunder the terrors of the law, alarming the conscience of the sinner; another by his winning way of presenting the truth can make the attractions of the cross glorious to man.

The grace of God sanctifies and gives a new direction to all the faculties of the soul. The renewed believer lives in Christ and for Christ. He lives in Christ as the branch lives in the vine, drawing supplies of grace from the fulness that dwells in Him.

Under the constraining influence of love he enquires

with the psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" How shall I manifest my gratitude? And the love which prompts the question will furnish the answer: "Lord, Thou shalt have all. My life, my all is Thine." And whether he has one or ten talents, whether his sphere of opportunity be limited or extensive, whether he be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, or be called to labor on the high places of the field,—being a new creature in Christ, he will work for Christ, his sympathies will be enlisted in the cause of Christ, his friends will be the friends of Christ; and standing forth in the moral grandeur of a regenerated nature, he will show the power of true religion and the beauty of Christian holiness, by a life of practical usefulness, testifying in the face of heaven and earth and hell that, being in Christ, he is indeed a new creature, 'old things having passed away, and all things become new.'

In conclusion: however varied may be our character and position, we are all classed under the two terms, *In Christ* or *without Christ*. What is it to be without Christ? We cannot realize what such a position implies. We can form but a faint conception of its appalling danger. To be without Christ is to have no conscious interest in the atonement of Jesus, to live without peace, and to die without hope. To be without Christ is to be exposed to the pitiless storm of God's indignation, the lightning of His anger, and the crushing of His curse, which any moment may fall

upon the impenitent. It is to have nothing but the slender thread of earthly life between the sinner and the blackness of darkness forever.

We all indulge the hope of entering heaven. You wish to spend the eternity that lies before you with Christ, and with the good and pure of all ages in the better land; but never can you be *with* Christ in heaven unless you are *in* Christ on earth. When the windows of heaven were opened, the fountains of the great deep broken up, and God swept the earth with the storm of His righteous indignation, the ark of Noah, with its precious freight of human life, floated on the waters, and that chosen family were as safe in their wooden refuge as in the hollow of the hand of Almighty God. That ark was an emblem of Christ as the refuge of the soul. A flood of waters will never sweep over our world again. Every rainbow gives us that assurance. But other scenes are before us. The heavens shall pass away, the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised, and all Adam's race shall stand before the great white throne—not one forgotten, not one away. We shall need a shelter then, we shall want a refuge then. Only those will have it who are then found in Christ, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Unconverted hearers! flee to the refuge *now*. The door of the ark is open. Will you enter? Remain no longer in the fearful position of being without Christ. Your danger is imminent; and unless you flee to the refuge your ruin is certain. So long as

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in but of suicidal folly. Would it not be folly in a
man to push off in a frail vessel, and brave the wild
and stormy ocean without a compass or a rudder or a
pilot? That recklessness is yours. Would it not be
madness in a man to stand on the edge of a yawning
volcano, refusing to depart, though he heard the mut-
tering of the subterraneous convulsions beneath him,
and saw the first flashings of the fire, the harbingers
of coming desolation? This infatuation is yours.
Without Christ as you are—impenitent and unsaved
—a point of time, a moment, and you may sink into
the darkness of perdition. Flee to the refuge! If
you would be with Christ hereafter you must be in
Christ now.

Some of you are in Christ. You are united with
the Saviour. Be thankful—be faithful. Maintain
constant fellowship with Him. Never let the union
be broken. Draw from Him your strength and life,
and so live that when you come to die you may,
like the Apostle, be “found in Christ,” not having
on your own righteousness, but that which comes
through faith in Him; and then, being found in Him,
you shall depart to be “with Christ, which is far
better.”

V.

HEAVEN, AND HOW TO GET THERE.

BY REV. JOHN W. GILPIN,

Staffa.

"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God."
—2 COR. v. 5.

IN the closing verses of the preceding chapter and the introductory verses of this one the Apostle refers to his assured hope of immortality and his expectation of entering heaven. When the perishable tabernacle of earth had fallen, and in which he had groaned and suffered and labored, he rejoiced in the prospect of being "clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven."

Epictetus says, "Show me one person formed according to the principles he professes. Show me one who is sick and happy; in danger and happy; dying and happy; exiled and happy; disgraced and happy." Such a person was Paul—always and under all circumstances happy. But it was through much and severe discipline that he, by Divine grace, had attained this excellency

of Christian character. Ever since that eventful day when he "saw in the way a light from heaven," the Divine hand had been at work, in privations, in perils, in persecutions, and "thorns in the flesh," moulding him, until he had become the polished stone, the consecrated saint, fitted and made meet for the Master's use.

Has God destined you for heaven? Then there is the work of preparation. "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." It is just as necessary and just as much God's work to prepare you for heaven as to prepare heaven for you. The stone is not fit for its place in the building when it is blasted from the rock. This is only the first stage in the process. It is to go into the hands of the stone-cutter to be hewn and dressed and "wrought" ere the master builder pronounce it ready for its appointed position. "Ye also as lively stones" are to be "wrought" for the heavenly temple; and in all the varied processes and experiences of life whose design and tendency is to develop you heavenward, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And if you ever enter the house not made with hands—whatever time it may require—whether an hour, or a year, or a lifetime, that work must go on, until, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," the everlasting doors shall swing inward to admit you to all the bliss and glory for which you have been fitted.

I. *That for which we are being "wrought"—"the self-same thing."*

Heaven, or as it is termed in the context, "A building of God; or, as described by Christ, "My Father's house." God makes an offer of heaven to all. It is no lottery for which you pay and take your chance; nevertheless it is a glorious prize, possible to every one who will compete for it. God's design is to bestow the "eternal weight of glory" upon every faithful one, for "whom He justified them He also glorified." And we have a declaration of the same purpose by the Saviour himself in His intercessory prayer: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

Heaven is a *holy place*. God is holy. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Three-One God, is represented as dwelling in the "light which no man can approach unto," as being "glorious in holiness." And the seraphim are described by Isaiah as manifesting the profoundest humility and reverence in His presence as they cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

Angels are holy; those pure spirits whose delight it is to worship the Lord as He sits upon His "throne high and lifted up," and who enjoy and reflect in a far higher sense and degree than perhaps we can possibly apprehend, the moral excellency of Jehovah.

The saints are holy. They are the spirits of the

just made perfect, "without spot and blameless." Character there is pure as heaven, "whiter than snow." Humanity in its glorious completeness, sanctified, glorified.

And all the exercises and employments of heaven's inhabitants are "holiness unto the Lord." The very atmosphere is laden with the fragrance of holiness. It is distilled like dew upon all heaven, and rises like incense ever toward the throne. The street of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent glass. Every gate is a pearl. The city itself is garnished with all manner of precious stones, "and the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Here the will of God is done perfectly. No discord. Not one dissenting voice or rebellious thought. Every spirit there knows and does God's will. His will harmonizes with infinite right, and that law is loved and prevails there. To His will there is entire submission—unquestioning and unhesitating obedience to all the behests of the Divine Governor, perfect confidence in His government, and loving acquiescence in its administration. And the inhabitants are in perfect and loving accord with each other. No jar, no striving for the mastery, no suspicions, no envyings; but beautiful, and sweetest, and completest fellowship reigns throughout.

"Before the great Three One
They all exulting stand,
And tell the wonders He hath done
Through all their land."

In heaven are the most exalted companionships and pursuits. The society of heaven is the most select, the noblest and purest and best of every age. That was select society in the school where Socrates taught, or in the academy and lyceum where Aristotle and Plato discussed their sublime speculations. That was select society where were gathered Burke, and Sheridan, and Johnson and Carrick. That was select society in the "Holy Club" at Oxford, where Wesley and his fellow-students met for prayer, and reading the Word of God. But in a far higher sense will the society of heaven be select, where congregate the "multitude which no man can number," who "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the eleventh chapter, mentions a few of them by name, distinguished even while in the earthly tabernacle for famous deeds and holy character. The time would fail us to recapitulate the glorious list. We can but imagine how blessed and desirable the society of such worthies as Enoch and Elijah, Moses and David, Joseph and Daniel, John the beloved, and not the least among them all Paul the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Had we time, we might tell you of the worthies of our own Methodism—of Wesley, the noblest Roman of them all, of Clowes, of Thornton and Punshon and Crompton, yea, and of Rice and of Carroll also, for these have gone to join the heavenly community, and are forever blessed, "and serve Him day and night in His temple." We need not speculate as to their pursuits and occupations, for

they will all be in perfect harmony with the sanctity of their own character and the holiness of heaven. "And the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." What that means we do not know. It is too heavenly, and we are too earthly to understand it. It may mean the redeemed powers of the saints—moral and intellectual—entirely and eternally satisfied. But no one has ever returned from that holy land to answer all our questionings. Paul with awful solemnity tells us that when he was caught up into Paradise he "heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for a man to utter." But when we pass to the other shore ourselves, then we "shall know even as we are known." Such is the place, and such the society and employment of that "selfsame thing," for which we are being "wrought." Let us next consider:—

II. *The fitness required for an entrance into heaven.*

Holiness is required. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Emphatically, we are told that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This is not the place for entering into any controversy as to whether holiness is a first or second blessing; but whether it be attained at conversion, or afterwards, one moment before death or twenty years, the fact is, that if we would enter heaven we must be cleansed from all unrighteousness in this life. The

great promise of the gospel in Ezekiel to the Church and to every Christian is, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." The prayer of our Apostle for the church at Thessalonica was, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is what we need to qualify us for heaven. Not only to be converted, but to be sanctified. There is a grand concert to which you are invited, and for which you need a ticket; but you also need a capacity to appreciate the music. The ticket will admit you to the concert but will not capacitate you for enjoying it. Pardon gives a man a ticket for heaven, but sanctification qualifies him for enjoying it. There is no Methodist purgatory. Our fathers in the Church were sufficiently wise and Christly to keep all such popish trash out of our creed. The Scripture speaks of no "second chance beyond the grave." Christ is sufficient, and sufficient *now*. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." If sin be upon the soul when it passes from this life, that sin will burn and damn forever. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still." "Be ye holy." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And when the old man gives way entirely to the new one, and the subject is really and virtually a new creation through-

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out,* then and then only are we fit for heaven. Contemplate for a moment the holiness of God and angels—the purity of the saints in light—and say are you prepared to join them. To expand this thought and emphasize it more fully, and also that we may clearly understand in what this qualification for heaven consists, let us remember that he who would enter heaven must do all the perfect will of God. When Christ was on earth, He taught us to pray “Thy will be done in earth as it is done in Heaven.” And He set us the example by submitting His will to the will of His Father—“Not as I will but as thou wilt.” Wilfulness upon our part is rebellion, and the revolt in the soul must be quelled, and the entire heart must be brought into subjection to Him who is Lord of that kingdom which “is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” It is this unwillingness to submit to the Divine rule, this dissenting of the heart to Divine truth, that is the greatest obstacle to the extension of Christ’s kingdom here, and that forms a complete barrier to our entrance into glory. The will is the man. The will is king. The unrenewed will is opposed to Christ’s government, and sets up a government of its own; so we read, “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And between these there must necessarily be eternal conflict. There cannot be two governments in heaven. Christ there is King. He is on the throne. His will is law. All

* Credo.

things are subject to Him. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." The unrenewed will can have no part in the Doxology of the skies—"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever." It would mortify it to hell, it would be torment indescribable to the unsanctified will, to hear the Lamb lauded by the multitude. If you would join in the acclamations to Heaven's King, and find your ineffable joy in crowning Him Lord of all, you must enthrone Him in your heart now. If Christ taught us to pray "Thy will be done," it can be done—done on earth as it is done in heaven. *Done*,—not merely assented to, or theorized about, but *done*. Done in your business, done in all the successes and reverses that may be your lot. And when your will is sanctified, and Christ reigns in your heart, you will find yourself in accord with the holy pursuits and society of heaven. If we love the earthly, and take delight in those indulgences that gratify the carnal appetites, how can we expect to experience most blissful contentment, and eternal satisfaction, in the worship and service of the glorified? If we would be sharers in the pleasures that are for evermore, our tastes, our occupations, our recreations must all be pure. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, not having lifted up his soul unto vanity or sworn deceitfully." What would the sot, the

covetous man, or debauchee do in heaven? How would those who sought their pleasure in the ball room, or theatre, or at the card table, or horse race, feel at home in the company of Elijah, and Jeremiah and John the Baptist? But why specify? Absolutely there is no room in the "house not made with hands" for such as these. Men may take delight in these things, call themselves Christians, be members of the Church, and go to the Lord's table, but Christ will say to them at last, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." If you would engage in the worship of the upper temple, you must feel and say with David, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." If you would mingle with the white-robed throng up yonder, you must love the company of the good here. If you would sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the courts above, and blend your voices with the voices that fill all heaven with music, you must first have the new song put into your mouth, even praise unto our God. If on the other shore you would be crowned and hear the King say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," you must bear the cross, fight the good fight of faith, deny yourself, and count all things loss that you may win Christ.

III. *The means and process of preparation for the "selfsame thing."*

God declares it to be His purpose to glorify all whom He justifies. Man may thwart Him, but undoubtedly that is His design; and Christ is preparing a place for His people. "I go to prepare a place for you." He has passed into the heavens and is "fitting up" the mansion in the Father's house for the reception of all His faithful ones. Then His people are being prepared—"wrought,"—for that prepared place, "He that hath wrought us," that is, made us ready for it, *made us to fit into it.*

The means of process and preparation for heaven embraces much. It includes the *atonement work of Christ*. In the covenant made between the Father and the Son for the salvation of our race, one of the conditions of that covenant was that the Son should die, and that in this way the claims of the divine government should be met, public justice satisfied, and the salvation of the sinner made possible. So Christ died for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." No man could be saved, no man could ever reach heaven only through Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." So Christ is your salvation. Believing in Christ, receiving Christ in all His offices, is the penitent sinner's only hope. It also includes the *gift of the Holy Ghost*, the executive of the Trinity, to give effect to the death of Christ, by

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awakening conviction in the mind of the sinner by His persuasive grace, through the medium of the truth, and renewing the heart of the "contrite" one in righteousness and true holiness; and all that He does in and for the believer in "bearing witness" and "guiding into all truth." Are you to be "wrought" for the "building of God?" You need the Holy Ghost. Are you weak and ignorant, and "know not what you should pray for as you ought?" "The Spirit Himself helpeth your infirmities and maketh intercession for you with groanings which cannot be uttered." Are you hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and longing to be filled with all the fulness of God? "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And are you waiting in the "upper room," with the other disciples, seeking a higher qualification and a more complete furnishing for Christian service? "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." "And ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." There are also the means of grace—public and private—as a factor in the process of preparing souls for heaven.

The *preaching of the Gospel*. "It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Undoubtedly the preaching of the Gospel is the most important work in which man ever engaged—second only to Christ's own redeeming work. It is nothing less than to be "ambassadors for Christ;" to



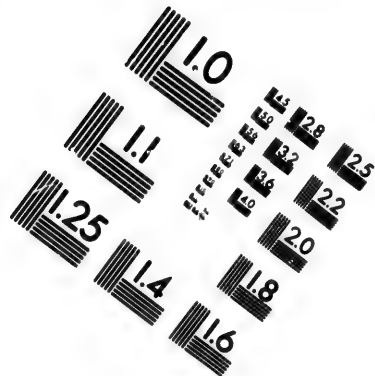
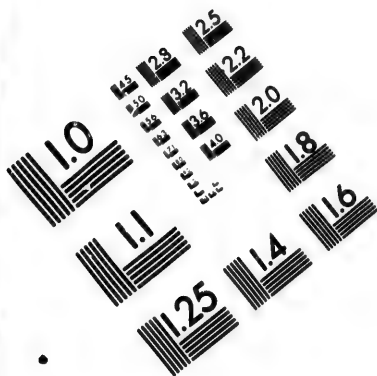
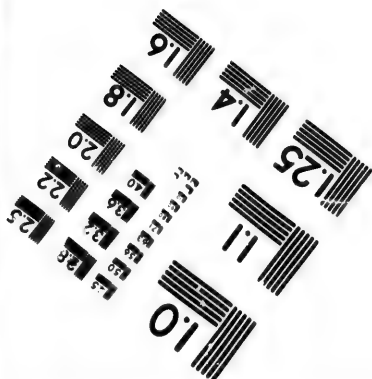
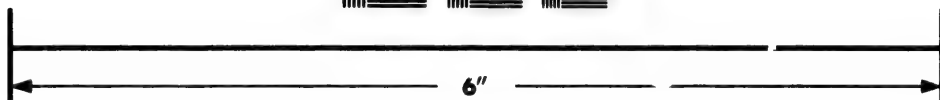
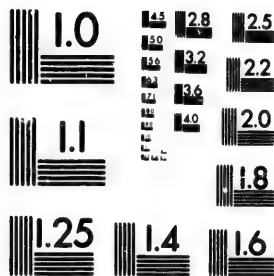


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beseech men in "Christ's stead to be reconciled to God."

There is the sinner,—how is he to be won for Christ? The Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Is the human heart as hard as adamant? "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Is it not a fact that men love darkness rather than light? Do not men cloke their sins? Is it not evident that sinners justify themselves in their worldliness, and selfishness, and lusts; and yet, at the same time, conscious of their insecurity, betake themselves to refuges of lies? How are they to be reached? How warned of their danger? How is every false prop to be knocked from under them, and they shown their awful peril? Listen, O my guilty brethren one and all: "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Are anxious inquirers to be instructed in the way of faith, and led into the enjoyment of God's pardoning mercy? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

Are Christians to be built up in Christ and sancti-

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fied? It is by the TRUTH. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by *these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature." Let the Gospel then be preached. It is the very Thermopylæ of the situation. Souls—immortal spirits—are to be "wrought" out of sin and into holiness and heaven. And God's method of accomplishing this glorious result is by the preaching of the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The press? O well, the religious press is doing much toward regenerating society, and lifting men up to the divine; but the secular press needs its lips washed—it needs to be born again. Bands? Singing? O go away, you don't know the human heart, you don't understand human nature. These things may for a time beget a pleasing emotion, and produce a temporary excitement in men's minds; but if this country is to be saved from scepticism, and formalism, and secularism, it will be done by preaching Christ crucified. Not the emasculated, namby-pamby kind of thing that boarding-school misses call "æsthetic," but the blessed Gospel truth that will search to the core, and storm the strongest fortress of the soul. This was Christ's plan for, and the apostolic idea of, saving men. And to the very end of time the proclamation of the Gospel will be pre-eminently the means divinely countenanced for the world's conversion, and for the universal spread of the Redeemer's kingdom. Doubtless, "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

Another means to be employed in promoting the salvation of the soul is *prayer*. "Lord, teach us to pray." "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Prayer is the spirit communing with its God. If thou would'st be "wrought" for the "selfsame thing," be prayerful. Pray, not so much for God to come down to you, as for God to lift you up to Him. Prayer is not the using of phrases, or the mentioning of promises, so much as it is a work going on in yourself, bringing you into sympathy with, and making you Christ-like. Therefore, be in the *spirit* of prayer. Have the Master's spirit. If you live in the spirit of prayer, you will find yourself in a holy furnace, going through the process of spiritual refinement from all dross and moral recrement, and aspirations and experiences, never known before, will be begotten in you.

When you pray you challenge the attention of God, you come within the realm of Divine scrutiny. Therefore, expect to be searched. Remember the eye of the Almighty is on you. A statue was to be erected to the memory of the great Napoleon; and at infinite expense and labor a block of marble was brought to Paris for that purpose. But when the sculptor came to examine it his keen eye detected what had escaped the scrutiny of all others, a thin, almost imperceptible line, running the whole length of the block; the marble was fractured, and the artist refused to touch it. In

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prayer be pure in your motives; the Lord looketh on the heart. If you are tainted with selfishness, expect nothing from Jehovah. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Remember the infinite benevolence and inexhaustible resources of Him to whom you pray.

"Thou art coming to a king,
Large petitions with thee bring.
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

When you pray be willing for God to do anything with you or for you. Be willing to do anything or be anything for God. Plead his promises; remember the conditions. Here is one, take it and be a man: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Do not be daunted by difficulties. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." Take off your gloves, then, and *strike*. God is trying you; where is your faith? How can you expect to reign in the heavenly kingdom if you cannot force an entrance into the gracious one? Now strike again. Quit you like men. KNOCK and it shall be opened unto you. There, the gate gives way, you pass in, and God is there, and you are more than conqueror. So let your souls be brightened, and purified, and sanctified by prayer. It was after the scene at the ford Jabbok that the wrestler graduated from Jacob to Israel; and God said to him, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

And it was after Carmel that Elijah was translated. Lord, teach us to pray.

I can but mention a few other things in the Divine working that have proved means of grace to many souls: a constant study of the Word, religious conversation, fasting, Christian beneficence, self-examination, and personal consecration. "He that hath wrought us." The stone for the temple is "wrought"—quarried and chiselled and polished until it is fitted for its place in the building. So the gold is "wrought"—put into the crucible, refined, put into the die and stamped as current coin of the realm. "He that hath wrought us"—quarried, hewn, heated in the furnace and polished. "Wrought" sometimes amid much trial, and sorrow, and pain, and bereavement, and perhaps poverty and persecution, but still "wrought." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Some in the olden time "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." But, brothers and sisters all, be not discouraged by this recital, for we read in the Divine Word, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

IV. *By whom we are "wrought"—"God."*

Then there is a sphere where God moves, and divine energy is acknowledged. Then there are effects that are not produced by the "complex play of molecular forces," and results that are accounted for on other grounds than that of "natural phenomena." Growth heavenward, spiritual advancement, Christian sanctity, are not traceable to any "chemical disturbance." "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." Then there is a God who is the cause of, and who superintends and directs all operations and movements that have for their object the highest well-being of our race. "In the beginning God."

God the *Creator*, who formed us at first. We are the workmanship of His excellent hands. I care not to trouble my mind or vex your souls with any of the scientific theories concerning the ages that are said to have elapsed during which man was in process of development. It is sufficient for our purpose to know that we came from the hands of God; and it is so restful to sit down and read the common-sense view that Moses takes of it, "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Having made us He knows us, is thoroughly acquainted with the entire human mechanism, and in His hands "are our breath and all our ways." He it is who creates us anew, who reproduces in us the life of love and holiness. "Create in me a clean heart, O God." And we are to be in His hands as clay in the

hands of the potter, as the original clay from which He formed Adam, that He may mould us and fashion us again after His own likeness.

God our *Redeemer*, who has wrought out for us such a wonderful scheme of salvation; who bought us with blood. And we are sure that while the work of preparation is in progress He will guard with watchful eye those precious jewels which are to adorn His crown, so that "no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper." Oh, Christian brother and sister, ye have been bought with a price. Your Lord's life was given for you. He loves you with an everlasting love. Trust Him in all the discipline of life. He is but fitting you for the glory that shall be revealed in you.

God our *Father*. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We know not the processes we shall have to pass through before the Father is satisfied with us, and considers us worthy of a place in the "building of God." But, in the meantime, comfort your heart with the blessed truth that you are in the Father's hands. "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" But it is the Father. "The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." Tender and kind and loving, our Father, we know Thou art. The furnace is hot at times, and Thy chastisements are grievous, but we rest in Thy fatherhood. Let the work go on

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until Thou shalt see thine own image in us, and until we shall answer thine own blessed ideal of fitness for the Father's house, and we shall hear Thee say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father."

"Then when the mighty work is wrought,
Receive Thy ready Bride;
Give us in heaven a happy lot,
With all the sanctified."

TO CHRISTIANS.

Remember, you are being "wrought" for heaven. Let that encourage you. Keep your eye upon the prize. When the work is complete you are to be advanced to that glory. Then have hope. Do not prove refractory. Do not be despondent.

This is the life for being "wrought." Do not be disappointed if you have not a large surplus of ease or pleasure while you are in the earthly tabernacle. This life is for something else than wearing gay and costly attire and counting mortgages; and you need not be at all surprised if the next development of Providence set you down in a forest cottage to live comfortably on bread and water the remainder of your life here.

This life is preliminary and introductory: the future is the life proper. But short as this life is, the endless future depends upon how you live now. There are good things in store for you somewhere. Where will you have them? Here or yonder? Never forget that there is one place where there are no good

things. At last we shall get home to the "selfsame thing," and God will be there.

Will this "selfsame thing" compensate you for the being "wrought" for it?

O yes, one hour of it—one moment?

A single glance at its glory,

A single draught of its joy,

And it is for ever! AMEN.



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VI.

WRONG VIEWS OF DEATH

BY REV. H. T. CROSSLEY.

Evangelist.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—
1 COR. xv. 55.

THESE words sound strange to those who have a different idea of death than that entertained by Paul. One of the main secrets of Paul's happy and useful life was the view he entertained of his death. It is very important that all persons have correct ideas about Christian dying. Let us look at some of the wrong views held concerning the death of a Christian.

(1) Death is thought of as a "dark valley"; people speak and pray about it as such, and sing when friends die, "They are going down the valley, the dark death valley." This view of death naturally fills the mind with terror. Is it then a scriptural representation of Christian dying? Those people who have this idea think it is derived from Psalms xxiii. 4, but when we turn to the passage we find nothing

is said about a "dark valley," but that the words are calculated to inspire us with a holy enthusiasm: "Though I walk through the valley of the *shadow* of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Now, if we apply these words to death—though I do not think the Psalmist was particularly thinking of death when he used them—is there anything in the verse to inspire or for a moment suggest the dark and dismal thoughts that some have, or the doleful words and songs that we so often hear. Bid farewell to this wrong view of death and sing, "I fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

(2) Death is thought of as "passing through the waters of Jordan." Nearly every person has this view, hence you will hear it expressed so often in prayer, in conversation and in sermons. Then we sing about "Jordan's stream and death's cold flood," and "Bear me through the swelling current." Even Bunyan, in his allegory of death, represents Christian as passing through the deep river, while fears possessed him, and he with the utmost difficulty kept his head above water and reached the other shore. Have you this view of death? If so, I wonder not that the thought of death fills you with fear, even though you are a devoted Christian. Have we any authority from Scripture for holding this alarming view of death? I am so thankful to be able to answer this question in the negative. The passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is no doubt typical of the Christian's

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passage from earth to the heavenly Canaan, i.e. death; but it is surprising how people have ever received the notion of "Jordan's stream and death's cold flood" which "fright us from the shore." Read the account of the passage of Jordan in Joshua iii. 14-17, and you find that when the feet of the priests touched the brim of the water, God made a passage across, and the priests marched on dry ground until they reached the midst of Jordan, where they stood firm, while the 600,000 effective men, besides women, children and others, passed through on dry ground, after which a memorial pile consisting of twelve stones was erected in the midst of Jordan. Was a grander sight ever seen by mortal eye? See in it a true type of death and forever dispel from your mind the thought of the "cold river of death," and instead of singing about "fording the river" and the "cold stream," to a mournful tune, when you are thinking of death, or when your friends pass over Jordan, sing in faith:

" When I tread the verge of Jordan,
 He'll its waters then divide,
 Bear me through in faith triumphant,
 Land me safe on Canaan's side.
 Songs of praises, songs of praises
 I will ever give to Thee."

(3) Death is thought of as a cruel, victorious enemy, rather than the messenger of heaven. Death to the human race is the result of Adam's sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and death is therefore no doubt an enemy; but it shall be

destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26), and in the meantime it is a conquered enemy by Christ. It is conquered now, for our Saviour "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). Look at Paul as he gazes upon death and peers into the grave, while with triumphant tones and defiant words he says: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is the proper way for us to think of death. One of the purposes of Christ's death was for this end. He died to "deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." A Christian has no right to be fearing death, and it is but a misconception of death that causes him to dread it. Sin is to be deplored and repented of. Christ should be received as the Saviour from the sting of death, *i.e.*, sin, and then thanks ascribed to "Him who giveth us the victory." Those Christians who have had the greatest dread of death in life have met it calmly and joyously. Why is this? Often, when a boy, as I was going through the fields, I saw a dark object in the distance which frightened me, for it looked like some huge animal, but as I drew closer I found it to be but a harmless log or stump. I was deceived and frightened because I was short-sighted and nervous, but as I drew near my fears subsided, because I saw the object distinctly. So we are spiritually short-sighted and nervous, hence many have looked at death in the dis-

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tance, and it appeared dark and hideous, but when they have approached it they have seen it to be the messenger of the Saviour to call them home. Why do we

" Shake at death's alarms ?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call us to His arms."

Another reason for the dread of death is, that when our Christian friends die, we look upon death from *our* standpoint and not from *theirs*. Not long since I was talking to a man whose wife had died a short time previous, and in the midst of the conversation he said, "Oh, death is awful!" I replied, "Did your wife when dying say so?" His face brightened up and he said with fervor, "No! She was so happy, and told me not to weep, for she was going home to Jesus." I then put the question, "Is death awful?" and received the answer, "No, not to the dying Christian." When our friends have died, we have realized that it was awful to be left in our sadness, but was death awful to those who left us? If we could separate the death of departed friends from the bereavements, what sight is more beautiful. Come with me and let us stand by the side of Mrs. S——, as she meets death. The doctor and her husband are anxiously watching her, not knowing that death was so near. Suddenly her face brightened, and with a voice that seemed heavenly, said, "Husband, I'm dying. I'll soon be at home with Jesus. I want to sing:

'Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus,
Steal away, steal away home,
I've not got long to stay here.' "

Her eyes were closed and she stole away home.

"So let me pass away, gently and lovingly,
Only remembered by what I have done."

We should gather our ideas of death from the Word of God and the death of Christians. The Bible in no place presents death in such a light as to cause us to stand in dread of it, and the way Christians die is surely not alarming. "Behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace" (Ps. xxxvii. 37). Are there not ten thousand examples of the peace and glorious triumphs of dying saints?

We have already seen from Scripture that the views of death generally held are wrong. Let us look at a few more representations of death as presented in the Bible. It is frequently called "a sleep of the body." It was said of Stephen, "He fell asleep in Jesus." Jesus said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," but they did not at first understand Him; and at another time He said that "the maid sleepeth," but was laughed at. Have we sufficiently thought and understood this beautiful image of death? We work during the day, and at night lay our bodies down in peace to sleep, expecting to waken in the morning. Let us "work while it is day," and then, when the night cometh and it is time to sleep, we shall peacefully rest, with the hope of awakening in

the morning of a brighter day. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. . . . Comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 14-18).

People usually think of death as being painful, and hence fear it. God does not make a mistake in calling it a "sleep." In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred there are no more pains in dying than in going to sleep. The common remark about departed ones is: "He passed away peacefully."

Another and very high conception of death is expressed by Paul, when he says, "I am now ready to be offered." It was an ancient custom to pour a liquid upon the sacrifice as it lay upon the altar. Paul referred to this custom when he expressed himself "ready to be offered" (2 Tim. iv. 6), or poured out upon God's altar as an acceptable sacrifice. He expected to die a martyr's death, but his mind was not filled with the thoughts of the block and cruel persecutors. In anticipating such a death, he said to the Philippians: "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Thus he saw his spilt blood, not as the evidence of the triumph of his enemies, but as a sacrifice poured out upon God's altar. Is it any wonder that, having such a view of death, he should rejoice and say, "For the same cause do ye joy and rejoice with me." Surely if Paul could look upon his violent death with such thoughts, we should have none different when thinking of ours. I am so thankful it is written: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. cxvi. 15).

Let this thought foster itself in our minds, and it will produce some such feeling as Paul had ; and instead of looking upon death as the triumph of our foe, we shall see it as "precious in God's sight." Thus we shall be filled, not with terror, but with joy and rejoicing ; while, with reference to our departed Christian friends, we shall be able to joy and rejoice with them, though we sorrow on account of our own personal loss of them.

Let us look at one more Scripture view of Christian dying. Paul, speaking of death, calls it "the time of my departure" (2 Tim. iv. 6). He thus thinks of it as the time when he, as a mariner in a foreign port, on his Saviour's business, shall weigh or lift the anchor and sail for home. Such a thought of death is most cheering, and especially so because we are not left to conjecture, or in uncertainty, as to where home is, and the way to it. Jesus says, "The way ye know," for "I am the way," and we know Him as our Saviour ; moreover, we know the place, for it is where Jesus is. Paul had the desire "to depart, and to be with Jesus." He did not think of his spirit sleeping with the body until the resurrection, or occupying some intermediate place until the judgment, but as "being with Jesus." Entertaining such a view of death, we can sing "Going home,"—yes, going home, sweet words of comfort and of cheer.

A heathen idolater in Hindostan was dying ; his spirit was troubled with regard to the future, and he anxiously exclaimed, "What will become of me?"

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A Brahmin priest calmly answered, "O, you will inhabit another body." He replied, "And where then?" "Into another." "And where then?" "Into another; and so on through thousands of millions." The dying man looked at him a moment, and then, with his last agonizing breath, uttered the words, "And where shall I go last of all?" The human soul seeks for a definite hope.

How thankful we ought to be that we are not left to exclaim, "Where shall I go?" while echo only answers, "Where?"

We know Christians go to heaven at death, for Jesus said to a dying believer: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43), and Paul thought of weighing the anchor and sailing home "to be with Jesus." Therefore, we can look forward to our departure with the Christian hope, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." We have Christian friends who have gone from earth; we know where they are. "They sing the Lamb in hymns above, and we in hymns below." We should always think of them as at home with Jesus.

I heard one of our ministers, in a fellowship meeting, speaking of his children; he told of the conversion and piety of two and then said: "We had another, a dear boy, but"—here he paused to control his emotion, and then with a new impulse said "*we have him yet.*" No wonder that we as a congregation sang in chorus, "I have loved ones in the Promised Land." We should think, yea, we do think, of our friends who

sleep in Jesus, as "not lost, but gone before." Then, as we know where they are, and that we are going home, we know that we shall join them and "know each other there."

A little boy sat on the front steps as the shades of night were gathering, and hearing the footfall of his father coming up the walk, called out with his sweet voice: "I am waiting for you, pa." A few days after he sickened and died; the father said: "I know my little boy is in heaven, and I often hear, as it were, his voice calling to me, 'I am waiting for you, pa!' and, by the grace of God, I mean to join him."

We have loved ones there—some of you have children; some parents; others brothers and sisters. Do you suppose they have forgotten you? Have you forgotten them? It is a blessed truth we utter when we sing:

" They are waiting at the portal,
They are watching at the door,
Only waiting for my coming,
All the loved ones gone before."

Shall we meet? Will you not this moment resolve and say, "By the grace of God, I'll meet them."

We shall, however, in all probability, stay here for some few days or years more. What will you take as your ideal in life? I think I hear you saying, "To me to live is Christ." Whether your days are many or few on earth, be devoted to Him who bought you with His blood.

Between this life and the other, however, there is that which we call death. How are you going to think of it? Are you going to entertain those erroneous and distressing views that so many have, and that are contradicted by the death of almost every Christian? or will you take the Bible representation of death, which is confirmed by the dying testimony of Christians of every age and in every nation?

If we, according to the teaching of Scripture, view death as a conquered foe; a sleeping in Jesus; an acceptable offering to God; God's messenger to call us home; a departing for home; a glorious passage through Jordan; a being with Jesus, and hence with those who are with Jesus, we shall have all those distressing fears concerning death dispelled, and with Paul say, "To die is gain."

There are two ideas which it would be well for us to dwell upon for a few minutes. The first is this:

A mistake that so many make concerning death is to doubt their piety because they have not grace now to die by, and because they feel they would sooner live than die. I suppose there are few who have not been troubled on this very point. They read of Latimer and Ridley or others rejoicing at the stake, or hear of some one dying in Christian triumph, and the temptation comes: "Could you go to the stake like that, or die as he?" and then, because they do not feel as if they could, the temptation is that they are lacking in grace. Moody was asked one time, "Have you grace enough to go to the stake *now*?" He

replied : " No ! I don't want grace for that, I am not going to the stake, I am going to the Hippodrome to preach, and I want grace to preach as I ought."

Miss M. was on her dying bed, and was afraid that when death came she would not have dying grace. I, with a friend, visited her and found her in this state of mind. We asked her if she had grace enough to live by ? She replied " Yes." We said, " You are not dying, and therefore you do not need dying grace, but when death comes, He who gives you grace now will then give you dying grace." She saw the truth, and her fears and her doubts at once were gone. About four hours after that, she called her friends to her bedside, bade them good-bye, and received their promise to meet her in heaven. She meditated for a moment, when she said : " Can this be death ?" and then, with a radiant face, she said :

" Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are ;
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Her eyes and lips closed, her face turned to the wall, and her happy spirit was gone to be " forever with the Lord."

Christians, let us never expect grace until we need to use it, and God will never fail us. The passage through the Jordan was not made until their feet touched the brim of the river, but it was made as soon as they needed it. Do not fear about Jordan's stream

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until you reach it, and then the waters will divide. Has God ever failed you? Do not for a moment think that He ever will. Samuel erected an altar and called it Ebenezer, *i.e.*, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Abraham erected an altar, and called it Jehovah-Jirah, *i.e.*, "The Lord will provide." We may erect our Ebenezer and Jehovah-Jirah, and, as we stand between them, sing :

"I'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

When visiting the sick, I often find good people who are troubled and tempted because they have such a strong desire to live, while at the same time they think it very probable that they will die. Not unfrequently there are many good people doubtful of the piety of the sick, because they are so tenacious of life. Is there any cause for doubt here? Are we to build our hopes on a *willingness to die*, or on a *personal trust in Christ* as our Saviour?

I visited a lady who was much troubled, and doubted her fitness to die, because she was so anxious to live, though she had little reason to think she would recover, as her disease was consumption. I asked her if she was trusting in Jesus now as her Saviour, and she replied, "I am." I then said to her, "I do not want to die now, and yet I am not perplexed about it. I have as much reason as you to wish to die, and you as much as I to wish to live. Love to God is shown by devotion to His will. I show my devotion to God by being

willing to live and be well. God gives me life and health, because He wills that I should live and be well. God gives you life, though sick, because He wills that you should live and be sick. You show your devotion to God by being willing to live, although you are sick. When God wills that we shall die, then is time enough for us to be willing to die. If you are going to die to-morrow, it is not for you to will to die to-day. Let each of us leave ourselves trustingly in His hands, leaving life or death open questions, while we each moment trust in Jesus and say, 'Thy will be done.'" From that moment until six months after, when she fell asleep with the words "Precious Jesus" upon her lips, her peace flowed as a river. I ask you is not that correct logic, and should not we act upon it? Why do those leaves on the tree cling so firmly to life, while the wind whistles through the branches, threatening to tear them off? They have functions to perform, which when done, a frost touches them and a gentle zephyr is sufficient to loose their hold and cause them to fall. So each of us has a work to perform, or a mission to serve, and it is right that we should cling to life, though disease may threaten, but by and by, when our work is done, and the hour of death shall come, we, as the leaves, and a thousands of dying Christians, shall calmly resign our lives. Wait till death comes before you expect grace to die. But be assured that, as you trust in Jesus, grace and resignation will come as soon as you need them.

Take the second thought, which is the opposite of

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the first. Some few have the strange idea, that to have a desire for death indicates a high degree of grace. Let us see if this is true. Suppose a father sends his sons into a field of ripe wheat to cut and shock it up, and about ten o'clock goes out and finds them under a shade tree, saying, "I wish it was night, I long to go to the house." Does that indicate devotion to the father, or does it indicate what we sometimes call laziness? God sends us, His children, into this world, saying, "The field is white unto the harvest. Go, work to-day." Do we show devotion to God by wishing it was night, and desiring to leave the field and dwell in heaven? We show devotion by saying with our Exemplar, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work," and then, when the night of death does come, we can pillow our head upon the promises, and go to sleep, saying, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

Some think that the *Bible* teaches that a desire to depart and be with Jesus indicates a superior grace. Let us see if such is the case. There are examples in the Bible of persons wanting to die. Elijah expressed the desire to die (1 Kings xix. 4), but it was not the result of piety. He had got discouraged because his efforts to do good were not attended with more success, was completely tired out with overwork, which had so engrossed his mind that he had neglected to eat or sleep; his life was threatened by wicked Jezebel, he fled for fear, and was now under a juniper tree in the

wilderness, in a most disconsolate state, and he said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life." The Lord did not either censure or praise Elijah, but, like a loving parent, put His child to sleep, and when he awoke gave him something to eat, cheered up his spirits, and set him to work again. God had something better for him than dying under the juniper tree, namely, work and translation.

Jonah is another who wanted to die (Jonah iv. 8), but it was at a time when he was least prepared. He thought he was disgraced, and was in a passion because the six hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites had not been destroyed, and when the Lord spoke mildly to him, he gave the insolent reply, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." In neither of these cases had grace anything to do with the desire; but in one it was occasioned by utter disconsolateness, while the other was fiendish anger at the result of God's mercy.

There is one more *apparent* example in the case of Paul (Phil. i. 21-26). Many people think he preferred to die rather than live. We could hardly wonder at it if he had, for he had suffered so much. He was now in prison, living in uncertainty as to the hardships and death that were before him. But then, in these circumstances he did not choose death, but says, "What I shall choose I wot not." He then gave his reason for not being able to choose, that he found himself in "a strait" between two forces of attraction. The gain that would be his drew him to desire to depart and be with Jesus, while the benefit that he might be to those

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who needed his presence drew him to desire to live, and this necessity forced itself upon his mind so strongly that it inspired a confidence which led him to say, "I know that I shall abide." It is quite *natural*, if a person merely considers between the life here and the life in heaven, to say, I am "willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8); but it is *Christian* to be not only willing but desirous to stay here for the benefit of others, rather than to depart for personal gain. * It is easy to understand how good persons, when in circumstances to cause despondency, or when merely thinking of themselves as they contrast earth and heaven, may sigh for rest in the "sweet by and bye," but that feeling is not produced by the grace of God. It is not unfrequent that ungodly persons grow tired of life, and all that keeps them from suicide is their felt unfitness for another life, while not a few do take the "leap in the dark."

One object of Christ's death was to influence us to *live* aright: "He died for all, that they which *live* should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him that died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). We show the true Christian spirit by living unto Him, and not by desiring to leave this world.

A man that had read so much about martyrs that he almost coveted to be one, said to his friend, "I have grace that I could die for Christ." The other wisely replied, "Have you grace that you can live for Him." We can show our love for Christ as much by living

for Him as by dying for Him. Look at life and death as presented in the text: "To live is Christ, to die is gain." If a Christian desires to live, it is especially for Christ, or for the good of others, which is the same thing; and if he wishes to die it is particularly for gain, that is, for self. Who shows the greatest amount of grace, he who desires to live for Christ's glory, or he who wishes to die for personal gain? There is a time for the Christian to desire to live, viz: While God chooses to let him live and assigns him a mission. There is a time for the Christian to be resigned to die, viz: When his labor is done, and God says "Come up higher." It is not for us, however, positively to *choose* life or death, though we *may* at times *desire* the one or the other, but to leave ourselves trustingly in our infinitely wise and loving Father's hand, saying, "What Thou dost choose is best."

Some of our nearest kindred and dearest friends, after living for Christ, have "gone to be with Jesus," and now they know the gain of death, and we, though sorrowing at our own loss, rejoice at their infinite gain, so that we could not be so selfish as to call them back if we had the power. Our lives will soon be over and we shall join them. Let us, as we think of and are so impressed with the shortness of life, instead of desiring to leave earth, be inspired to do what we can for Jesus, and when the Master calleth for us, we shall truly realize that "to die is gain."

In the battle of Prestonpans, the General fell with three mortal wounds. The soldiers, seeing their com-

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mander fallen, became dispirited, and the enemy began to gain the advantage, whereupon the General raised himself on his elbow, while the blood jetted forth from every wound, and said with his failing voice, "I am not dead, my men, I am looking at you to see you do your duty." The word was repeated from one to another, until all caught the inspiration it was calculated to impart, and then with a new enthusiasm went forth and gained the victory.

Our Captain, that he might "proclaim liberty to the captive," fell with five mortal wounds on Calvary. He died—was buried—rose again—ascended on high—is now alive forevermore, and is looking at us, and in our homes, in the church, in the world, in business, and in all the departments of life, let us do our duty, until at the close of life we shall be able to say, "Victory through Christ!" And He will say, "Well done."



VII.

THE PRINCIPLE OF A NEW LIFE—THE ABSOLUTE IN RELIGION.

BY REV. ROBT. PHILLIPS,

Acton.

‘Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.’—
JOHN iii. 7.

NO person ever lived who understood the wants of men so thoroughly, or sympathized with them so deeply, as Jesus Christ. His knowledge of men was perfect and His judgment in deciding upon their needs infallible. As a result He saw things as they were and pronounced upon them according to truth. Hence from His deliverances there was no appeal, for it was admitted “Never man spake like this man.” The main purpose of His visit is carefully defined by Himself in language that cannot be misunderstood: “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” In this statement we have not only a definition of the purpose of the visit, but a painful revelation of the state of men—they are ruined and lost. Hence the primary purpose of the visit and the system of which He is both author and founder is to

save and restore. From this it is evident that He did not come as a teacher or model merely, but as a Saviour to help the helpless to help themselves.

His ministry was accompanied with miracles by which public attention was arrested and investigation provoked. In consequence, many flocked to see and hear the man who had turned the water into wine, raised the dead, and cleansed the leper; who had caused the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. Among the many who came was the astute and philosophical Nicodemus. Refined in manners and cultured in intellect, with a keen philosophical mind, polished by rare scholarly attainments, he selects the quiet of the night season to have a personal interview with Jesus. Influenced by the reports he heard and an intense desire to increase his stock of knowledge, he appears before Jesus, and in language the most courteous addresses Him as the "teacher come from God." In His reply to this very flattering reference to Himself, Jesus discovers His wonderful knowledge of human needs, and with an authority that cannot be set aside He announces the principle of a new life as the absolute both in science and religion. "And said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Startled, and no doubt disappointed, Nicodemus attempts to philosophize upon this strange statement, and in bewilderment asks, "How can these things be." In reply, Jesus refers him to a fact in nature around which gathers mystery impossible for the philosopher to

penetrate, but the effects of which were visible to the most casual observer, and then, in the language of the text, reaffirms the principle He had announced, and insists upon its possession and experience. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." This principle of a new life constitutes the central idea in the system of Jesus Christ, by which He proposes to save and restore the race, and into the merits of this principle, both as a point of entrance and departure, we now intend to look.

This principle of a new life is an absolute necessity, as it affords an entrance into the most important mysteries of life designated by Jesus the Kingdom of God. Two reasons support this position, and they are furnished by Jesus Himself, and both are implied in the text :

1. Because this change is life. This is what imparts value to it. It is a new life, and the mode of entrance into it is defined, being born again. This new life is spiritual and effects the inner man, and it works from the centre to the circumference of his being. The absolute necessity of its experience will appear if we consider three aspects of its character as life: (1) It implies "Activity;" (2) It implies "Energy;" (3) It implies "Ability." These phases of its character indicate its value and necessity to its possessor. They point to internal elements of power which nothing else can confer. Activity is opposed to stagnation. Viewed in the light of its effects nothing produces such activity as does this life. It wakes up the man and

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the community, and creates a commotion peculiar to itself tending to action that "turns the world upside down." Energy is another form of this life, and may be seen in its overcoming resistance. It is the dynamical force in the spiritual life, and by it the child of God resists and overcomes. As ability, this life implies the possession of a power to use this force in preserving and perfecting this life. Hence, the man who possesses this life steps into the kingdom of mystery, and with a power and enlightenment that is supernatural, he sees and surveys the Kingdom of God.

2. Because this change is the condition of entrance into these mysteries; therefore, he who does not comply can neither enter nor see. No wonder Jesus emphasizes the statement and says, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

What is it that compliance with this condition affords an entrance into. It is the Kingdom of God. This is the dominion over which God presides, and in which He rules. In its wider sense it is comprised in the natural and supernatural. This is a vast domain, and one full of mystery the most interesting and difficult to unfold. This kingdom, made up as it is of the natural and the spiritual, is a perfect whole, and with both aspects of this domain the man that is born again has to do. In explaining its mysteries, defining its terms, expounding its laws, and interpreting its language, both science and theology have to do. In this kingdom God is the fountain of all knowledge. He has originated it, directs its movements, and He

alone can safely and correctly explain them. This kingdom is a realm of riches and wonders, and all declare the glory of God. Here God is the dispenser of the riches, and the revealer of the secrets. Hence to have these things imparted to us we must be born again.

What is the privilege which the new birth teaches? This privilege is threefold: (1) It is entrance; (2) It is vision; (3) It is knowledge. He enters, he sees, and knows. To these facts of privilege the apostle refers when he says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And here I hold that there is a revelation made, and aid afforded in science as well as in theology to them that love Him, that is not afforded to any one else. "But God hath revealed *them* unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth *all things*, yea, the *deep things* of God." See how God helped the artificers in the work of the tabernacle (Exodus xxi. 1-11), and in the same way He can help the scientist in his exploration of the facts of Nature, and the babe in Christ in his understanding and grasping the facts of the *higher* life. But in the case of both they must be born again. This is what constitutes the marvellous disparity between the man that is born again and the sceptic. The one sees and knows because he enters, the other cannot see and therefore does not know because he does not enter. As a result, the allegations of science, falsely so called, are constantly asking,

"How can these things be?" And when it cannot understand, because it will not come to learn of the "Me," it asserts that the spiritual is a delusion, and thus, with its rushlight in the outer darkness, proposes to account for things in its own way, and when its conclusions are disputed it raises a war with religion, and brands it as a bar to a correct knowledge of science. But, notwithstanding, Jesus insists upon it as an experience, and the testimony of such men as Sir William Dawson, Dr. Withrow, Dr. Dallinger, and the ex-President of the British Science Association, and many others whom we could mention, concurs with Christ that a new life is a necessity to a correct understanding of the facts of science as well as the attainment of the higher life. Hence, these men indorse the principle of a new life, and agree with Jesus in saying, "Ye must be born again." What is the cause of the war between the so-called scientist and the Bible as the text-book of theology?

1. A number of those systems of theology which profess to interpret the Bible are false, and consequently not in harmony with the Bible. Therefore these misrepresentations of Divine truth are seized by the sceptic and charged to the Bible.

2. Again, the principle is lacking which is asserted by Jesus to be necessary to a correct understanding of the natural as well as the spiritual. Put these scientific croakers side by side with the men whose names I have mentioned—men who, though Sauls among the scientists, head and shoulders taller than

the tallest, yet modestly but positively assert that to a correct understanding of the facts of Nature it is necessary to be born again. Therefore the principle of a new life is an absolute necessity to correctly understand the natural facts, as well as to participate in the higher experience, of the Kingdom of God.

Again, this principle of a new life is an absolute necessity because it imparts a power which nothing else can impart but itself. This constitutes the spiritual science by which the soul that is born again "sinneth not" (1 John iii. 6, 9, 10), and becomes the point of departure in those activities necessary to the nurture of its own life to that point of experience where the blood cleanses from all sin, and the soul realizes the maturity of spiritual life where "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Between these two points power is needed, and this new life through an indwelling Spirit supplies that power. This power manifests itself in the following forms, and in these forms the Holy Spirit supplies the power through the life :—

1. It imparts the power of self-restraint. Unsaved men are off the track, out of their orbit, and their lives are a go-as-you-please sort of thing. The man born again is saved and restored, with power put into his hands to restrain and control his movements in accord with the law of God. Therefore he does not go beyond the bounds, but keeps within the limits of the divine enclosure. John Nelson's experience is a

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beautiful illustration of this fact, who, when the scoundrel spat in his face while preaching, says, "I felt a force come into my arm, and the hand instinctively closed to fell the fellow," but instantly he restrains himself and falls upon his knees to pray that the coward may be convicted and converted.

2. It imparts the power to overcome temptations. In this case we have a forceful illustration in the history of Joseph—when he was assailed by a powerful temptation, he asks, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He was tried but endured and conquered. He had the power and resisted.

3. It imparts the power to forgive injuries. Jesus says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the model of action, and where the new life is enjoyed it is applied and practised, and the martyr Stephen is an example of its possibility. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 59, 60).

4. It imparts the power to obey and keep the Divine commands. Of which Abraham in his offering up of Isaac is one of the most sublime and pathetic illustrations furnished, in which promptness and fidelity blend, making it a perfect act (Gen. xxii. 13). Here is a power which operates within the domain of the spiritual, and discovers an ability that qualifies its possessor to sustain a correct relation to the law and government of God. Hence John is correct when he

says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9).

This principle of a new life is an absolute necessity to the true prosperity of the world, and the legitimate development of its resources. This is certainly affirming a great deal, but nothing more than the facts warrant us in expecting. The reasons for this position are as follows:—

1. Because it gives man his right place in the world. Man is out of his orbit, and hence no power in the universe can replace him but the power of a new life. Other powers have tried but failed.

2. Because it constitutes him the safe custodian of all the instruments of the world's prosperity and progress.

3. Because it affiliates him by a proper relation to all its grandest possibilities.

4. Because it enables him to invest capital that enriches future generations.

Nowhere have we a more luminous illustration than in the missionary movement. Civilization has tried its powers and introduced its instruments, but they have miserably failed. But John Hunt went to Fejee, Dr. Moffat and the Shaws to South Africa, Judson and Carey to India, the Moravians to Greenland, Williams to Patagonia, and Case, Evans and George McDougall to the Indians of our own land. Results—Look at the monument which these men by a new life have raised and you will see.

Again, we affirm that this principle of a new life is an absolute necessity in order to alleviate the misery of the world and to mitigate its evils by the destruction of human selfishness. Selfishness is the bane of happiness and progress, and it lies at the root of the world's ills and misery. But, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." Hence this new creation works out the above result, as the subjoined reasons prove:—

1. Because it correctly defines human relations. "No man liveth to himself," therefore the law of mutual dependence and reciprocal influence has its grandest illustration in the new life.

2. Because it develops and directs intelligent sympathies. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."

3. Because it imparts correct views of the uses of property. It not only acknowledges the owner but admits his claims. It says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

4. Because it secures returns and realizes results that abide. Here you have the grandest possible illustration of the death of Christ, and in it the greatest benediction possible for the world to receive. As an illustration of the entire argument of this principle working out the great problem of life, I would refer to the following:—On the Ohio and Baltimore Rail-

road there lived a widowed lady and her daughter. The husband and father had lost his life by an accident on the road some years previously. The mother and daughter lived in a shanty on the bounds of the track near where the road crossed an immense gorge. This gorge was spanned by a bridge of trestle work. In the month of December of the year we now speak, a sudden thaw took place, accompanied by an unusually heavy rainfall. On the morning of the 24th of December the thaw set in, and by evening the water in the gorge had swollen into the dimensions of a torrent. About 11 o'clock in the evening, as this lonely couple were retiring to rest, Janet said to her mother, "Mother, would it not be awful if the bridge should give way," and scarcely were the words uttered when a heavy rumbling crash told that the thing was done. The midnight express from Baltimore was due at 12.10. This train usually had from fourteen to sixteen coaches; this night, having hundreds on board due for Christmas festivities, it had eighteen. "O! Janet, what shall we do?" What should they do either for the Company or the people? To neither were they indebted: both the Company and the world had treated them unkindly. But they were both children of God, and they looked at the case from that standpoint. "Come, Janet, we must prepare to make a signal," and out into that pelting rainstorm they carried all that they had that would burn and made a pile between this people and death. The pile is kindled and the fire flashes athwart the darkness of that awful night, and just as the fire

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has exhausted its material the train comes thundering along and draws up in front of that frightful chasm. Think of those eighteen cars filled with men, women and children. Think of the awful result if that signal had not been made in the darkness! But a correct view of human relations, developing intelligent sympathies and giving a correct view of the use of property through the principle of a new life, in those lone, penniless women, triumphs. Life and property were saved and they were rewarded.



VIII.

WORLDLY WISDOM *VERSUS* THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. J. KENNER,

Chesley.

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”—1 Cor. i. 21-24.

ALL systems and things have their essentials or more important parts. The vessel has its rudder, the watch its mainspring, the building its foundation, the arch its key-stone, and the human frame its heart, What the rudder is to the vessel, the mainspring to the watch, the foundation to a building, the key-stone to the arch, and the heart to man's physical system, “the Cross of Christ” is to preaching.

Preaching, without the “Cross of Christ,” is no better than a rose without beauty or fragrance, a tree without sap or foliage, the sun without radiance or heat, or a home unblest with furniture and uncheered

with a living inhabitant. The Apostle Paul, under an abiding sense of this, declares to the Corinthians: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." To the Galatians: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and to the Church at Colossia, after referring to the mystery which had been hid from ages, but now was "made manifest unto the saints, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Here the subject, manner, and end of Apostolic preaching is concisely and graphically portrayed. The *subject*, Christ; *manner*, warning and teaching; the *end*, to present every man perfect to Christ. With such a theme, deeply impressed with the awful trust with which he was delegated, trembling with solicitude to discharge it faithfully, moved with unquenchable zeal for the glory of God, and ardent affection towards the souls of men, intimate in his knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, accurate in his conception, fearless in the declaration of the whole counsel of God, powerful in his eloquence, simple yet dignified in his manner, superior to human censure, contemptuous of human applause, skilful and faithful in his adaptation of truth to his audience, his bold, his searching, his irresistible appeals to the conscience, and the demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost, leave no room to wonder that when Paul preached, Felix trembled, Agrippa was "almost per-

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suaded," and vast numbers cried out in agony, "Men, brethren, what must we do to be saved?" Without further introductory remarks, note four things:

I. THAT THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD.

The wisest of the heathen give no indication that they either knew the true God or the worship due to His name.

Some philosophers asserted the being of a God, others openly denied it, while others again embraced, or pretended to embrace, the notion of a multiplicity of gods, —celestial, terrestrial, aerial, and infernal.

Greece, in its glory of philosophy and learning, thus classified its gods: 1. He who presides over all things. 2. Those who exercise dominion above the moon. 3. The demons, whose jurisdiction was in the air below it. 4. The heroes, or souls of dead men, who were supposed to preside over terrestrial affairs. The demons were also worshipped for fear of the mischief they might do.

The Chaldeans had twelve principal deities, with such a number of subordinate ones as to render it difficult, by arithmetical figures, to represent them.

Imperial Rome, from political motives, adopted all the gods adored by the people that submitted to her victorious arms, and sought to perpetuate her kingdom by crowding them into the capital.

Temples were erected to all the passions, diseases, fears and evils to which humanity was exposed.

Many of them were monsters of the grossest vice and wickedness, and their rites were absurd, licentious, cruel, and often consisted of unmixed crime and shameless dissipation and debauchery.

The creation of the world was an act so far beyond the energy ascribed to their deities, that many declared the world to be eternal; others, that it assumed its present aspects of order and beauty by a fortuitous concurrence of innumerable atoms; while a third class ascribed it to blind chance, without troubling themselves to say who chance was, where he resided, or what were his attributes.

Contemplating man as possessed of powers and capabilities so sublime as to lift him quite out of rank of every animal beside, they were surprised to find him at times seeking his destruction with as much industry as the beast avoids it.

Of the existence of evil they had the fullest and most unquestionable proof; but of its origin and remedy they were equally ignorant. They sought to find out the secret of human happiness, but after propounding two hundred and eighty-eight theories, found themselves in need of another to explain the mystery. . . . Truth was at a discount with the best of men, for they taught that a lie was oft-time to be preferred to it. And if profane history had furnished no account of the people's morals, the Divine Word has not left us uninformed. From Paul's Epistle to the Romans we learn, that so far from human wisdom giving an acquaintance with God and

producing a pure worship, that "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (Rom. i. 23-26, 28-31). Again, Paul, addressing the Corinthians, says, "Ye do wrong and defraud. . . . Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you" (1 Cor. vi. 8, 9).

Plato, writing of Socrates, says, "He was the best, the wisest, and the most just of men." He proclaimed his philosophy, and for about four hundred years he and his disciples had the world to themselves, to reform it if they could; but history's page will be

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searched in vain for one who was so far informed as to rise above the superstition of his country. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

II. THE WORLD INDULGED VAIN HOPES!

1. "*The Jews required a sign.*" The collective posterity of Jacob were long known as Israel or Israelites. Israel being a new name that God gave to Jacob, his descendants shared the cognomen. When Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, ascended the throne, having taken the stupid advice of some thoughtless young men, he alienated the affections of ten out of the twelve tribes, who formed a kingdom under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat; from that time the ten tribes were known as the house of Israel, and the two tribes as the house of Judah.

About 700 years preceding the birth of Christ, the territory of the ten tribes was invaded by Shalman-ezer, king of Assyria; and being subdued, they were taken captive to Assyria, and from that time they have dropped from the page of history.

Five hundred and eighty years before Cæsar's proclamation that all the world should be taxed, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were subdued, and taken captive to Babylon. After seventy years, Cyrus, at the head of an immense army, diverted the course of the river Euphrates, and while Belshazzar and his thousand princes were given over to feasting and drunkenness, made himself master of the situation, and issued this proclamation to the Jews, "Who

among you feareth the Lord? His God be with him, and let him go up!" At this proclamation, the major portion of the captives left Babylon, repaired to Palestine, rebuilt the temple, and from that time the tribe of Judah, whose people being much more numerous than that of Benjamin, were distinguished as Jews. After that the term "Jews" is frequently employed to denote all who worshipped the true God, in contradistinction to the Gentiles, or heathen.

With a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, God had effected their deliverance from Egypt. Forty years the pillar of cloud had directed their course in the wilderness; their laws were declared amid the quaking and smoking of Sinai's stupendous mount; the flinty rock had wept tears to save them from raging and burning thirst; the heavens had dropped manna that they might not perish of hunger; the Red Sea and the Jordan had parted asunder to afford a pathway for their feet. Being so accustomed to miraculous displays of power, they thought nothing could be genuine unless attended with such display, and hence they became extravagant in their demands for signs and wonders to induce belief. (John ii. 18, 19, vi. 30, 31; Matt. xvi. 1.)

The greatest thing that galled their spirit at that time was the Roman yoke. From that they wanted deliverance. Any person would rise in their estimation, therefore, just in the same proportion as he made it appear probable that he would effect their deliverance.

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The pomp and splendor with which they expected Shiloh to be arrayed ill comported with the character of a spiritual ruler sent immediately from heaven. But because Christ was attired in humble garb, the star that marked the place and time of his birth, the voice from the rent heavens, the ministrations of angels, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the wonders attendant upon his crucifixion, were all overlooked by them. In fact, they shut their eyes and their ears to the clearest evidence, and still vainly looked for a sign.

2. *The Greeks seek after wisdom.* When Alexander the Great had extended his conquest over Egypt, Syria, and the countries beyond the river Euphrates, the Jews included Gentiles under the name of Greeks. Is. lxvi. 19, speaks of Greece and Greeks under the name of Javan. Daniel viii. 21, x. 20, describes Alexander as the King of Javan. Javan was a son of Japheth, one of the sons of Noah. (Gen. x. 2-4). The two names, Jews and Greeks, at this time, therefore, comprehended the population of the world.

Between the two peoples existed the strongest feeling of antipathy, for which many reasons might be assigned, but it need only be contemplated in its results. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with such aversion that they classed them on a level with dogs, refrained from friendly intercourse, and when Paul said God had sent him to the Gentiles (Acts xxii. 21), they vociferated, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." Paul says

of them (Acts xvii. 21), that "They spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing."

Miracles they discarded as only suited to fools, while they indulged in a vain philosophy, and entertained curious questions with an avidity the most remarkable.

The coruscations of wit, the creations of a splendid and excited imagination, the impassioned utterances of the orator, trained in their schools, had far more charms for them than the statement of historical truth, the study of practical duties, or the claims which any new teacher had upon their attention, unless he had issued from among the shady groves of their cloistered colleges, and were clad in the vestments of a pretentious philosophy.

III. WHEN MAN HAD DEMONSTRATED HIS HELPLESSNESS, GOD PROVIDED A REMEDY.

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

1. *God appointed preaching.* God appointed preaching as the method of instructing the ignorant, arresting the careless, convincing the skeptical, alarming the secure, reclaiming the wanderer and spreading His truth among the nations of the earth.

This method, which was founded in infinite wisdom, Paul, after his conversion, adopted as a life of labor, and informs us of a theme on which he delighted to dwell.

His was not *foolish preaching*, though such a thing is not without existence. When there is an affectation of learning, and grace of manner, finish of style, force of logic, scintillations of wit, affluence of diction, mastery of grammar, or pomp of imagination, made to engage the hearer's attention, instead of Christ, then we have foolish preaching. Men thirst, and are shown a picture of water. Men are famishing for the Bread of Life, and have exhibited a dissolving view of bread. There is danger of our not being able to subscribe to the Apostle's declaration, "We preach *not ourselves* but Christ Jesus the Lord."

To foolish preaching the Spirit cannot be expected to add His seal. The pure gold is dimmed, the glory is obscured. What the Catholics once did to a picture of Christ, drawn by a master artist, when they pasted a cheap picture of the Virgin upon it—that foolish preaching does by Christ and His Gospel. The lustre of the dewdrop, the splendor of the rainbow, and the beauty of the rose are not improved by any effort of man's. Gold needs not to be painted, and the Gospel needs not to be embellished with excellency of speech, or words of man's wisdom. The Gospel in all its native simplicity is the best thing for man.

2. *By the preaching of Christ crucified.* Christ, in the divinity of His person. Paul claimed for Him the highest dignity and honor. He represented Him as holding no inferiority to the Father Eternal, but claimed for Him perfect, unbounded, and everlasting

equality—"the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, God manifest in the flesh, the same yesterday, to-day and forever, for in Him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He is Emmanuel, God with us."

Christ, in the glory of His pre-existent state, the boundlessness of His love, the depth of His condescension, the superlative character of His goodness, the sublimity of His doctrine, the purity of His precepts, the amplitude and encouraging nature of His promises. Christ, in His astounding miracles, the greatness of His sufferings, the ignominy of His death, the preciousness of His blood, the completeness of His atonement, the glory of His resurrection, the majesty of His ascension, the prevalency of His intercession. Christ, in the variety of His offices,—a Prophet to instruct, a Priest to atone, and a King to establish His empire of truth and righteousness upon the earth. Christ in the universality of His government, the perfection of His administration, the glory of His conquest, and the absolute equity of His decisions in the day of God.

Christ crucified! Not the philosophy which Paul had learned while a pupil at the feet of Gamaliel. Christ crucified, and not the astounding incidents connected with his wonderful conversion. Christ crucified, and not the wondrous sounds which he heard and the enrapturing scenes which he beheld when, caught up into the third heaven, he dwelt amid the entrancing glories of Jehovah's throne. Christ crucified, and not

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the success which had attended his ministry as the zealous advocate of a new religion. Christ crucified was his distinguishing and favorite theme. Christ was his foundation and top-stone, his Alpha and Omega, his first and his last, his all and in all. . . . This is a theme which, like a tide of living water, has refreshed and blessed the land. A theme that has effected more stupendous revolutions than all the forces in the world beside. A theme that has hurled tyranny and despotism from their lofty pedestal, and given man a kindly interest in his fellow. A theme that meets the want of man's fallen nature by harmonizing the attributes of Deity in a grand scheme of saving mercy. This doctrine is the central orb in the Christian system, the pole star in the Christian life, the bridge that spans the mighty chasm between a world condemned and a world where the sunshine of Divine favor streams forth with undimmed splendor to gladden the hearts of the redeemed. Let us be faithful to this theme. It is not by might, not by power, not by miracles, not by wealth, not by argument, not by eloquence, but by the preaching of Christ crucified, and "by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

IV. THAT GOD'S REMEDY DOES NOT IGNORE MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

The excellency of the remedy does not guarantee its reception, hence—

1. *To the Jew it was a stumbling-block.* They thought Christ would be the descendant of royalty,

but He was the reputed carpenter's son. They thought He would have issued from the palace at the metropolis, but He came forth from the stable, from the humble village of Bethelhem. They reckoned He would set Himself in opposition to Cæsar, and free them from a foreign yoke, but He sent to the mouth of a fish for the tribute money, rather than give offence by non-payment. They thought He would be arrayed in pomp, and splendor, and attended with a grand escort, but He appeared in humble attire, and was followed by taxgathers, tentmakers, and fishermen. They thought He would commend self to universal approval, and command a general sympathy to help Him in setting up His kingdom, but He denounced the heaviest woes against the hypocrisy and rapacity of the scribes and Pharisees, and by His life of self-sacrifice and illustrious virtue, pronounced sentence of continual condemnation upon their creed and practice.

They thought He would subdue both His enemies and theirs; make all His opponents to lick the dust, and, however unwillingly, to help forward His grand designs; but He was taken and subjected to the most cruel, as it was the most disgraceful, death. The Pharisees thought good works and scrupulous exactness in attending to the ceremonials of religion were going to secure them Divine favor; He taught salvation to be in no other way than faith in the Son of God. The Sadducees entertained doctrines contrary to the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, or the resurrection of the body. Christ taught the ex-

istence of the angels, the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul. Hence, as He frustrated all their calculations and confounded their theorizings, instead of building on Him as the sure foundation, they despised and rejected Him, joined His murderers in condemning Him to death, imprecated His blood to rest upon them and their children, and, having thus stumbled and fallen for the past eighteen centuries, they have been weltering in their blood, and exhibiting their scars and wounds as a gazing-stock to the world.

2. *To the Greeks foolishness.*

To trust for salvation to one who did not save Himself? How it could be consistent to punish an innocent person, and accept His sufferings as a means of pardoning the guilty, and those who deserved to suffer? How sin should be hereditary, and so the offence of one man make all sinners? How God should be sovereign in His actions, and yet man be a free agent? How Jehovah could be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly? How Christ should be equal with God and yet the son of David? How faith should be the instrumental cause of salvation, and neither reason nor good works, transcended their powers fully to comprehend; hence they designated them "foolishness," and rejected them as unworthy of their regard.

But, brethren, in whatever light it may be contemplated by the worldly-minded Jew, or polished Greek, it is

3. *To them who are called the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Those who have heard God's remedy proclaimed, accepted it, believed, trusted, and obeyed its requirements, are styled the "called." Those who see that a subject presents certain aspects of mystery, and yet fail to construe that into a reason for its rejection—those who take the remedy as God-originated, and therefore perfect—those who, instead of looking for something better, make a ready trial of this—those who neither look for a sign, nor seek after wisdom, but embrace the gospel in the love of it,—these are the "called," etc. To these it is the *power of God and the wisdom of God.*

First,—*The power of God.* The power of God, making that perfect which the law had left incomplete. Lifting man's soul from the pit of miry clay, and placing him upon the rock Christ Jesus. The power of God, calming the upheaving of man's troubled breast, and giving him peace that passeth all understanding. The power of God, sustaining man amidst earth's rudest tempest, and enabling him to sing the conqueror's song, when he has to battle with the last foe. The power of God, doing battle with man's greatest, fiercest foes, and working out a complete redemption for the race. The power of God, in wounding and healing, breaking down and building up, killing and making alive, penetrating the deepest darkness, melting the heart of adamant, raising the morally dead into a new life. The power of God, triumphing

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over the fiercest opposition, the corruption of the human heart, the leagued power of empires, the polished shafts of perverted intellect, the combined agency of earth and hell. Christ the power of God, and

Secondly,—Christ "*the wisdom of God.*" Christ the wisdom of God, harmonizing, like the varied colors in the rainbow, the attributes of Deity in the grand scheme of saving mercy. The wisdom of God, making mercy and truth to meet together, righteousness and peace to kiss each other. The wisdom of God, showing how God can exercise His prerogative to pardon and let the guilty culprit go free. The wisdom of God, showing how He can sustain the laws of His moral government, and yet avert the stroke of His wrath from the head of the daring offender. The wisdom of God, in obviating the difficulties which oppose man's salvation; the wisdom of God, in the adaptation of means for the attainment of human salvation, viz., the sacrifice of Christ, the preaching of His truth, and the special agency of the Holy Ghost. The wisdom of God, in the appointment of the conditions on which salvation is suspended, and in the selection of instruments, ordained to make known the laws of reconciliation between the Sovereign of the Universe and a rebel race. Earthly philosophy never smoothed the dying pillow, human wisdom never gave man peace in prospect of meeting a Holy God. All the learning of the Greeks never gave peace to a guilty conscience. If ever this is effected, it must be in God's way, by God's remedy, by

the preaching of the Cross of Christ. Christ is both the wisdom of God, and the power of God. The preaching of His cross hath changed the savage into the humble disciple of Jesus; converted the persecutor into the preacher; the servant of the devil into the servant of God; the child of perdition into an heir of glory. Under the various calamities of life it hath imparted contentment and peace; beneath the pressure of sorrow it hath administered the richest consolation; and in the hour of death it hath lifted up the fainting spirit, and shed on its departure a gleam of celestial glory.

“Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name,
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb.”

My hearer, what is Christ to you? Is he precious to your soul? Do *you* believe in His Divinity? Is he to *you* the power of God? Is he to *you* the *wisdom* of God? Are you relying on His Atonement? Do *you* glory in His Cross?



IX.

DAVID'S AFFECTION FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.

BY REV. W. A. STRONGMAN, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D.,

Dundalk.

"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth."—PSALM xxvi. 8.

IT would be at once presumptuous and imprudent in us to expect to pass through life in circumstances very different from those which usually fall to the lot of man, because the result of our so doing could only be disappointment and vexation, proportioned to the strength of the foolish expectations we had formed. Prudence, therefore, would teach us to meet "the thousand various ills that flesh is heir to" in a proper spirit.

In order to this, we may derive material assistance from our Christian friends, and learn from their counsel and encouragement how "two are better than one" for the development of religious principles and heavenly tendencies. Like travellers also, journeying over routes not hitherto trodden by our feet, it will serve a useful

purpose to turn our gaze backward, and observe how good men of former times have conducted themselves while passing through similar scenes. By this means we discover that they sometimes derived support from the anticipation of a happy result of all their troubles (Job xxiii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18); and that on other occasions they fortified their souls by reflecting on the past, and, in either case, by referring their cause to God—"Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience," etc. (2 Cor. i. 12); and similar is the experience of the Psalmist, when exposed "to bloody men in whose hands were mischief," "Lord, I have loved the habitation," etc.

This is the language of the highest religious experience to which man's heart can bear testimony in all the great rounds of his religious bearings; for man's respect for the house of his worship will always be commensurate with the state of his spiritual life. If very great, heightened veneration; if very small, increased affection for the temple as well as the person of his worship. Man's religious life increases as his attendance increases, and it decreases as his absence is conspicuous. It follows from the very nature of things: to get near the heat is to come into contact with propelling, vivifying, and regenerative tendencies; to be receding from the heat is to glide into the region of chilly, enervating, and life-destroying influences. Communication with the good; the elevation of all that is upward in one's being; the helping of the tendencies that "halt between two opinions;" the

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destruction of those which halt, attracted by the fascinating allurements of Satanic device, are borne on and brought out by attendance upon the means of grace; for he who forsakes, wantonly and carelessly, the house of God and its sacred ordinances, must necessarily develop in all tendencies that are worldly, sinful, and devilish in their character; and he will be constant in the perpetuation of their life-destroying practicalities.

The especial points to which prominence should be given in connection with this subject are:—

I. THE OBJECT OF THE PSALMIST'S AFFECTION,—“THE HABITATION,” ETC.

II. THE REASON OF THE PSALMIST'S AFFECTION.

I. *The object of the Psalmist's affection*—“*the habitation,*” etc.—If this psalm were composed by David, as the prefix to it asserts, there can be no question as to what particular fabric his declaration refers. He means by it the tabernacle of the congregation, described in Exodus xxxvi., a portable building, which was carried from place to place during the journeyings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and afterwards erected in different parts of the land of promise, till at length it was fixed at Jerusalem. This tabernacle was divided into two parts or apartments—the holy place and the most holy. In the latter was the ark of the covenant, the lid or covering of which was the mercy-seat, overshadowed by the wings of the “cherubim of glory” (Heb. ix. 5). Upon this,

between the cherubim, the cloud of glory, or the symbol of Divine presence, appeared (Lev. xvi. 2), and from this place God communed with Moses (Exod. xxv. 22). So that the Psalmist seems to have respect principally to this as the place where Jehovah's honor or glory dwelt. But this "habitation" gave place to Solomon's temple; and that temple was succeeded by another, whose very foundations have been ploughed up in fulfilment of the Redeemer's prophecy. (Matt. xxiv. 2.) Christians, however, are not the less favored on this account, "for the Word was made flesh" (John i. 14).

In and around the tent wherein the Lord dwelt, in the centre of the camp, there was a manifestation of the presence of God. This was the glory of that house; but how scanty was the revelation! A bright light—the shekinah—is said to have shone over the mercy-seat; but the high priest only could see it once in the year, when he entered with blood within the veil. Outside, above the holy place, there was the manifest glory of the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. This sufficed to bear witness that God was there; but still, cloud and fire are but physical appearances, and cannot convey a true appearance of God, who is a Spirit.

The later revelation has the excellence of the indwelling of God in Christ Jesus—the glory of the only begotten of the Father, the moral and spiritual glory of the Godhead. This is to be seen, but not with the eyes; this is to be perceived, but not by the

senses. This is seen and heard and known by spiritual men—by men of heart sincere, whose mental and spiritual perceptions are keener than those of sight and hearing. There is an abiding, steady lustre of holy, gracious, truthful character about our Lord Jesus Christ which is best seen by these who, by reason of sanctification, are made fit to discern it.

The Psalmist was, moreover, limited in the fact of concentration of the place of worship; but this limitation has been graciously set aside, and freedom and universality of worship have been accorded to man, "for neither in Jerusalem nor Gerizim," exclusively, shall men worship the Father. He, before all temples, prefers the upright heart and pure; and is "where two or three" spiritual worshippers "are gathered together." If, therefore, we are so assembled, we may exclaim, "This is none other than the house of God."

1. *The Psalmist regarded this object with an ardent affection.* "Lord, I have loved," etc. "One thing have I desired of the Lord," etc. "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand," etc. He thinks fit to make particular mention of it to the heart-searching God when he wished to interest Him in his favor. So we find it to have been the case with God's people in all ages. We detect the ardency of devotion in the beautifully constructed synonyms, whereby the Church and her blessedness are expressed: Assembly of the Saints; Assembly of the Upright; Body of Christ; Branch of God's planting; Bride of Christ; Church of

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God; Church of the Living God; Congregation of Saints; Congregation of the Lord's Poor; Dove; Family in Heaven and Earth; Flock of God; Fold of Christ; General Assembly of the First-born; Golden Candlestick; God's Building; God's Husbandry; God's Heritage; Habitation of God; Heavenly Jerusalem; Holy City; Holy Mountain; Holy Hill; House of God; House of the God of Jacob; House of Christ; Household of God; Inheritance; Israel of God; King's Daughter; Lamb's Wife; Lot of God's Inheritance; Mount Zion; Mountain of the Lord of Hosts; Mountain of the Lord's House; New Jerusalem; Pillar and Ground of the Truth; Place of God's Throne; Pleasant Portion; Sanctuary of God; Spouse of Christ; Strength and Glory of God; Tabernacle; The Lord's Portion; Temple of God; Triumph of the Living God; Vineyard.

2. *The Psalmist regarded this object with a constant affection.* "Lord, I have loved," formerly. But the same affection prevailed, "out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake." He turned to the subject with pleasure. This constant affection will lead to holy usefulness. Look at Baxter! He stained his study walls with praying breath; and after he got anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and converted hundreds of souls. Luther and his co-adjutors were men of such mighty pleading with God that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the Cross. John Knox grasped in his strong arms

of faith all Scotland; and his prayers and work terrified despots and tyrants. Whitfield, after much holy, faithful, closet pleading, went to the "Devil's Fair," and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley turn more than ten thousand souls to the Lord, and lay the foundation of a system of evangelism that will not rest satisfied until the world is belted by its power, and blessed by its labors.

This constant affection also leads to blessings of an individual nature, and which are not, at the time of exerting it, known to him in whom it is exercised. A morning prayer-meeting was established in a certain village, with special reference to a revival of religion. It was, at first, well attended; but soon the interest declined, until only one man attended. One morning, he was met by one of the brethren of the church, who said to him: "Where, now, brother, so early in the morning?" "From the prayer-meeting," said he, in reply. "I thought," said the questioner, "that the prayer-meeting was given up long ago. Why, who was there, do tell me, friend?" "Well, I will tell you, brother," said the constant worshipper; "the Lord and I were there, and are there every morning, and most precious seasons we are enjoying." The next morning found this brother at his post also, and from that time other members of the church followed his example, until, in a few weeks, the room was full to overflowing, and a powerful revival followed that shook the neighborhood from one end of it to the other.

3. *The Psalmist regarded this object with a practical affection.* "I will compass thine altars," etc. (verse 7). He was not a mere professor, of which there have been too many in all ages. We do not mean here, those whose voices and purses are ready to help on every necessitous occasion; but those who profess to be friendly to religion and religious institutions, while they withhold everything but good words and wishes. David was a practical man, as all men should aim to be who live in a practical age and world. There are always some who are continually harping upon the cost of the Church, the expense of the ministry, the outlay for the missions—the constant drain upon the resources of the faithful, to support church appliances and church machinery for the evangelization of the world. Would the same parties but reverse the order of their argument, and tone up their doleful voices by heralding forth the niggardliness of the world in relation to churches and church-giving, they would strike a note that at least would be truthful in its accentuation, for the other is undeniably untrue. "If Bible teaching be true, he is a thief and a robber who has squandered on hangers-on his Master's goods; and instead of acting as steward has turned the Master out to starve on a percentage which he would think insufficient for his stable boy; and then, to quiet his conscience, invests a fraction for the Master's work. Men talk of giving a tenth! The New Testament sets up no such old Jewish standard, but puts a larger principle to work, which, when allowed to come to

fruition, will make us ask, not how *small* a percentage can I give to God, but on what percentage *can I live* while I work for God, and make use of His property for His cause. The radical wrong in the world's giving is to be obviated by our sense of duty to God, rather than in our sympathy for man."

And yet the gifts of property are not the richest gifts to the churches. I refer not now to the widows' mites, richer though they be than all the gifts of wealth, but to the gift richer even than the widow's mite—the gift of a consecrated life that only lacks time and opportunity to exemplify its heaven-born mission to the souls of men. A few years ago, on a wintry morning, a boy in the habiliments of poverty entered an old school-house among the western mountains, and avowed to the master a desire for an education. There was poverty laying one of her richest gifts upon the altar of religion, for that boy was Jonas King. On his humble bench, Carey laid the foundation of British Baptist missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then glowing with new-born love to Christ; he took him in to see John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, piety and benevolence increase together. They educated him, and that boy became Claudius Buchanan, whose name India will bless when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the Church. Zwingle came forth from an alpine shepherd's cabin; Luther from a miner's cottage; the apostles, some of them from fishermen's tents.

A practical church will be a fruitful church. When David compares Mount Zion with the Hill of Bashan, he intends, especially, to point out the fruitfulness which reigns in the Church of God; for there springs up beneath the dew of heaven such flowers and plants as are otherwise not to be found on earth. For where else blooms the rose of real love to God after the inner man? Where else flourishes the sunflower of genuine, child-like, and believing prayer? Where else the lily of an undissembled longing after heaven, and the floweret of humility, and that of child-like simplicity, and that of patience? Where else in the wide garden of mankind shall we meet with flowers like these, which have originally sprung from Paradise? And how many things beside grow upon the heights of Zion? There medicinal herbs against every disease perfume the air; there grows the Balm of Gilead, which brings eternal health; there flourish shrubs of life, which yield a never-failing vitality—nor is the plant wanting there which is an antidote to death. Blessed are the people who have obtained an inheritance upon such a soil!

II. *We find, next, the Reason of the Psalmist's affection.*

From an endless variety we select a few, which apply equally to his case and to our own. "He loved the habitation" of God's house, and we should.

1. *Because of the Proprietor's residence there.* It was not only the property, but the habitation of his friend, his benefactor, his God, "the tabernacle of Thy

honor," and therefore he loved it. The tabernacle itself was not what David thought God's house should be (2 Sam. vii. 2); yet, as God's house, he set his heart upon it. There may be other inducements to our attendance at church or chapel; it may be an elegant place; the music may be good; the minister and preaching attractive; or, we may be bound by personal interest or honor to give the place our support and presence. But let us remember that just as much as there is of respect to God in our services, so far it is good and acceptable in His sight, and no farther. We meet in the Lord's house, not for the beautiful singing and music which are there forthcoming; nor yet for the hearing of our favorite minister, when preaching on popular themes of the Gospel, or current topics of the day; nor yet because it is customary and fashionable so to do—but pre-eminently by reason of prayer, communion with one another, and intercourse with the God of heaven. It is His house. His presence is there. He is there in all His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. He is there to save. He is there to impress. He is there to build up. He is there to aid the endeavors of the weak as well as of the strong.

If our waiting together is that of novelty, curiosity, custom, or habit, merely, we fail in our grasp of the mighty reasons which men have adduced in all ages why God's creatures should be assembled in His house; and it is little wonder if, leaving the place of prayer under those conditions, we find no improvement in our religious condition; but, on the other hand, a

depressing coldness, a withering hardness. We came, we waited, we sat, we heard, we sang—without a purpose; little wonder that we received no blessing. If we went to the market, to the bank, to the political or temperance meeting, as purposeless as men often come to church, men would ask where were our wits, our heads—we must have left them at home, or given them away to others who could use them better!

Too many churches are like the ship in "The Ancient Mariner." The old mariner represents the corpses of all the dead men rising up to man the ship—dead men pulling the ropes, dead men steering, dead men spreading the sails. What a strange idea that was! And yet we have lived to see something like it: we have gone into churches, and have seen a dead man in the pulpit, a dead man as steward, a dead man passing the plate, and dead men sitting to hear! Of all deaths that is the ghastliest—it is death in the midst of death. It is the quintessence of death. It is the concentration of death amid a surrounding world of rottenness and putridity that lifts its reeking mass in the very face of heaven! You expect poison from noxious elements; icy coldness from physical dissolution;—but you are amazed, astounded, when any of these results proceed from contrarieties.

And yet man is a worshipping being. There is in his inherent nature, and in the circumstances in which he is conditioned, those principles existent which lead him to recognize and worship a Superior Being. Man must worship. The heathen had a notion that the

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gods would not like the service and sacrifice of any but such as were like themselves; and, therefore, to the sacrifice of Hercules none were to be admitted that were dwarfs; to the sacrifice of Bacchus, a merry god, none that were sad and pensive, as not suiting their genius. An excellent truth may be drawn from their folly, viz: he that would like to please God must be like God.

In the preparation for worship in the East, the Oriental drops his sandals, or puts off his travel-tarnished shoes at the temple door. And then divesting himself of secular anxieties and mundane projects, the place whereon he stands is converted into holy ground by the words: "Let us worship God." The Jews had before the doors of their synagogues an iron plate upon which to clean their shoes before entering and having entered, they considered, silently and reverently, Him with whom they had to do.

And yet numberless are those profound and worshipful hearts who love to adore God in the courts of the Lord's house. Said a minister of the Gospel: "I have in my congregation a worthy aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound; and yet she is always the first to be at the church. On asking the reason of her constant attendance, as it was impossible for her to hear my voice, she answered: 'Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it, and would be found in His ways; and He gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me;

another reason is, because I am in the best company, in the most immediate presence of God, and, among His saints, the honorable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in private—it is my duty and privilege to honor Him regularly and constantly in public!’” No wonder; for there is no pleasure so rich, so pure, so hallowing and constant in its influence, as that which results from the true, spiritual worship of God. Pleasant as the cool water-brook to the thirsty hart, so it is to us in our approaches unto the living Father.

2. *The Psalmist loved the habitation of God's house because of the company it furnished him.* We do not affirm that all who regularly attend public worship are as pure as they should be; but we contend that they are better than others in general. Many who attend no place of worship are often not more above the brutes in point of intellect than below them in the use of intellect. Sinfulness, forgetfulness of God, carelessness, are as fruitful in the blighting of the intellect as they are debasing to the spiritual powers of the soul. The man who habitually forgets God, and ignores attendance at His house and on His services, will soon reach the ultimate length of his tether, in the blotting out of all remembrances of God, heaven, and all the verities of his spiritual being. It will be thrice blotted out; in original and actual sin, and in the sin of rejected light. It will leave him threefold the child of darkness and of the devil, with the threefold chain of sin, forgetfulness, and negligence, binding

him in the bondage of his own waywardness and egregious folly. Whereas those who "wait upon the Lord," while they evince a better state of mind already existing, obtain a still greater degree of liberty from wicked or worldly enthrallments, become more unlike the beast and the devil, and more like those pure and happy spirits which worship before the throne in the courts above.

Like places, like company, all the world over. In liquor saloons, toppers and whiskey swillers; in gambling houses, gamblers and monte-card men; in ball-rooms, libertines and people of questionable character; in theatres, the upper ten-dom, with its down ten-dom of sinful actualities, and the cawing criminalities of the scorner and the debased; in hell, demons, imps, prodigies and profundities of evil, and satanic debaucheries—essences of all crimes and sinfulness which have culminated and are culminating there. But in the church, with its congregation of heavenly-minded worshippers, you have not only the direct opposites of all these, but their most profound antitheses. Look at the *object*: it is to worship God, and to do this is to worship all that is pure, and truthful, and lovely, in heaven or on earth, or in the universe of God. Look at their *manner*: it is not only devout, but pure; and devoutness and purity are born not of earth, but of heaven. Look at their *subject*: it is the Cross, the Saviour's dying love, the Messianic hope, the highest themes that men or angels can applaud or adore. Their presence, their waiting, their singing, their hear-

ing, their praying, their speaking, their giving, are crystallized into forms of benediction and adoration that are welcomed in the highest courts of heaven, for they are endowed with the latent energies of holiness and characteristic worth. If what is heavenly in its character can be seen in this world below, it will be evidenced in the actualities before us. The Christian's life, the family's concentrated piety, and the congregation's union of holy sentiment and holy devotion; and if it be not evidenced here, in the exemplifications indicated, it is in vain that we knock at the portals of heaven for the revealment of the glory of virtue and the triumphs of regenerative life.

3. *He loved it, again, because of the blessings God's habitation afforded.* Correct affections are profitable ones. If we worship in the beauty of holiness we shall not do it in vain. In God's house we may be blessed with a review of the past. While the minister dwells on the subject of Christian experience, we may remember how, when, and where the Lord arrested us; may review our self-loathing, our contrition and tears, our panting after the Saviour, till it pleased God to reveal His Son in us, and how, since then, "He has preserved our souls from death."

And in our Father's house there is still "bread enough and to spare," and therefore we may be blessed with present supplies. To this purpose the Psalmist says: "They shall be abundantly satisfied," etc. (Psa. xxxvi. 7-9), and here we may indulge the happiest anticipations. Thus David, after expressing his desire

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(Psa. xxvii. 4), proceeds, "In the time of trouble He shall hide me," etc. (vers. 5, 6, 10, 14).

If the Word of God is to be credited, or the testimony of good men is to be received, there is no place where such blessings can be obtained as in the service of God's house. And yet in the face of this, men have strange opinions at the present day. They can be absent two or three Sabbaths from service; never attend a prayer-meeting; are always absent at class-meeting; and yet have the presumption to tell us that they have lost no blessing, nor suffered any lack of progress by such neglect. They read the Bible at home; they pray in the family. It was a wet or a cold day; the horses were tired, or they were fatigued; they arose too late and could not be ready in time; the spring work was pressing them; the harvest was coming in; some friends dropped in *just* as they were preparing to leave home; some important business that could not be set aside had to be done, at any rate, they were not present at the services. And, after all, they were benefited about as much as those who did go, and they saved themselves the trouble of going in the bargain! A statement tantamount to saying that they will repeat it again. If it were a blessing then, why not again? If a great blessing then, why may it not be a greater blessing when it is repeated?

If one could measure the blessings of the stay-at-home Christian by the size of his temple, capacious indeed must the heart be that could retain all the

blessings (?) received. It is the old story of the monk, in the cells at Subiaco—repeated in every case of non-causation—who was always inattentive to religious duties, and, at the hour devoted to silent prayer, was seen to leave the church and wander away. Benedict, the Saint, coming to reprove him, said that he was led forth by a demon, in the shape of a little black boy, who pulled him by the robe and thus detained him. This demon, however, was visible to no eyes but those of the Saint, who, following the monk, touched him on the shoulder with his staff and drove away the demon, who from that hour troubled the sinner no more.

Where but in God's house do so many mercies inhere? There are the historic memories of the building itself; the services held there; the ministers who have preached the Gospel there; the holy men and women who have worshipped there. Here our fathers and mothers were converted; here they worshipped; and here their funeral obsequies were conducted. In yonder sacred ground their last remains were deposited. Here for years have been the Sunday-school, the class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the public services. Here they are now, and here they will continue, until, in the mercy of God, our sons and our daughters, our kinsmen and our neighbors are brought into the fold of the divine and blessed Christ.

4. *In conclusion, the Psalmist loved this habitation because of the holy habits it induced. Habits formed*

by holy exercises and which qualify for the felicities of heaven. Heaven is a place of happiness, but it is such only to souls fitted for its holy employments. Many can bear, or even like a little religion, by way of variety, yet must not be troubled with too much of it, nor be confined at it too long; whereas those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" feel delight in those pious devotions by which they are trained up for the exercises of the blessed. So that they may not unfrequently say:

"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this;
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."

We may remark how it happens that some lose, by degrees, all relish for Divine things. They do not guard against the effect which custom has upon habit. At first family affairs, and perhaps personal affliction detain them from the house of God; and they have no apprehension of sustaining loss beyond their present privation. After a while their souls get into a cold, lifeless condition, and when the impediment is removed, they have contracted a habit of indolence, and lost their inclination towards even the most public and external forms of godliness.

Let us exercise the affection while we may, and cherish it while in confinement, that still it may live and influence us for a better life. The evils of present negligence, or the advantages of present diligence, will

be felt in times of sickness, bereavement, and death. All these are times to enjoy religion—not to seek it; the frame of mind, the ability, the time, are all against such seeking. Let us cultivate now the spirit and conduct of the Psalmist, "Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto us." Watch and pray against failures, but let us take heed of desponding under them. Let us be content to make progress as we are able. The oak springs from the acorn, but does not become a tree at once. The mushroom springs up in a single night, we know. But what is a mushroom? Let us not be satisfied with a dwarfish growth, when God is ready to make us "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

God would build for Himself a palace in heaven of living stones. Where did He procure them? Did He go to the quarries of Pharos? Did He bring the richest and purest marble from the quarries of perfection? No, ye saints, look "to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged, and to the rock whence ye are hewn." Ye are full of sin. So far from being stones that are white with purity, ye are black with defilement, unfit to be stones in the spiritual temple which should be the dwelling-place of the Most High. He hath not selected the best, but the worst of men, to be the monuments of His grace; and when He would have a choir in heaven, He sent Mercy to earth to find out the dumb and teach them how to sing.

X.

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR.

BY REV. W. H. HINCKS,

Preston.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—MATT. xxii. 39.

WHEN Christianity is properly understood, we shall see that two of its most prominent doctrines are the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The doctrine of human brotherhood is implied in our text. Some men regard the Christian religion as the system which teaches them how they may get to heaven; but he who reads well will find that the religion of Christ is not one which deals exclusively with heaven. It teaches us how to live while on earth—our duty to our fellow-man. On the discharge of this duty, faithfully, depends our full enjoyment of the future. We are not responsible for being born in this world, but once finding ourselves on the earth, we are responsible for our manner of living on it.

In the text before us, we have a rule never before given to the world. In it we see how we are to act toward our fellow-man. We are to love him: not

because he may be respectable—it is easy to love respectable people. Not because he may be rich—it is easy to like the rich. Not because he may hold high position. Not because he is an Englishman and you are an Englishman. Not because he and you may be Scotch. Not because he and you may be Irish. But simply because he is a *man*, created by God, and redeemed by Christ. Our text sweeps aside all national cliques, as a housekeeper's broom sweeps away cobwebs.

So of church distinctions. The men of old, who were circumcised, held proudly aloof from those who were uncircumcised. They not only held aloof, but treated them with scorn. They not only treated them with scorn, but looked on them as dogs, socially and religiously. Our religion has abolished all that. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," says Paul. So it must be. I, as a Methodist, in order to find out who is my neighbor, am not to ask the question, Is he an Arminian? and does he think as I think in religion? The Presbyterian, in order to find out who his neighbor is, is not to ask the question, Does he believe in election, and the Westminster Confession? The Baptist, in order to find out his neighbor, is not to obtrude the question, Does he believe that all men must be immersed? The Episcopalian is not to ask, Is my neighbor of *our* parish, and does he subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles?

No! the brotherhood of man implied in our text is confined to no church, and is broader than all man-made creeds. We begin to see this, thank God, and are looking forward to a united Christianity—to a brotherhood which will let one man of one creed kneel with another of a different creed, at the same altar of dedication. I know there are doctrine idolaters whose god is of mediæval theology, who pretend to be shocked at the idea of fraternizing with men who do not think as they do in religion. If you ever meet with such, treat them kindly, but do not argue. Our mission to such is, by practical imitation of Christ, to teach a brotherhood broader than all human dogma, deeper than all "isms," and lasting as eternity.

But, says some one, "Am I to love a man who is a liar? Am I to love a man who is a drunkard? Am I to love a thief? Am I to love men deep down in the gutter of human misery? There are some men most detestable, most hateful. I have often longed in my soul to curse them—am I to love them?" I ask of such: Did God make him? Is he a man? If so, he is your neighbor. You must love him with the love of benevolence. I do not interpret God's Word as commanding the love of respect to the unworthy. This is impossible. But the love of benevolence is always possible. He who gave this command comforted the harlot, spoke words of love to a thief, and associated with publicans—the liars and money-grabbers of those days. There is no getting round it. This brother-

hood is as broad as humanity. We have been too accustomed to call those men neighbors who were next of kin, who think as we think, whose tastes are like ours, whose names are honorable among men.

Christ was a better man than Judas. Christ knew that Judas was a traitor. He knew that he would be willing to sell his best friend for gold. But knowing him to be a villain and scoundrel of the deepest dye, how does He treat him? He takes a towel and washes his feet. He knew that Peter was a man that was soon to tell one of the worst of falsehoods, and yet He washes Peter's feet. He knew that in the hour of His greatest need, the other disciples would steal off and leave Him to His enemies, and yet He washes their feet.

When you want to know how far you are to stoop down in the service of man, look at the incarnate God washing the feet of the traitor Judas, washing the feet of the vacillating Peter.

The world was in a very sick state when Christ gave this command. Many doctors had tried to cure it. Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Buddha, had lived and died. Each of these had given advice to sin-sick man. While we reverence them for their efforts, we cannot but term their methods superficial. They rubbed cosmetics on the skin, instead of purifying the blood. They blistered the surface, when the very centre of manhood was fatally diseased. Their labors were vain—the leprosy of spiritual manhood remained. Christ saw what none of them had found out. He

saw that the root of man's misery was, first, his alienation from God, and second, his alienation from his brother-man. Christ proposed a *cure*, and that was to love God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.

What has been the result to the world? We cannot claim that man has yet obeyed this command in full. But we do claim that he has done so in part, and already we see glorious results.

In the first place, notice, that the principle of our text has struck a death-blow to the reign of brute power. The only morality of the pre-Christian era was that of might. There was a time when a character called Hercules was worshipped for no other virtue than that of brute force. There was a time when such men as Goliath of Gath were the heroes of whom tender women sang with greatest pride. Ask the page of unprejudiced history how the foundation of the British Empire was laid. That foundation was laid on the bones of slaughtered humanity, and baptized with the baptism of innocent blood. It was partly laid by buccaneers, who, on sea and land, slew the weak and stole their possessions. By what right did a Saxon ever sit on the throne of England? Merely that of brute force. By what right did a Norman ever wield the feudal sceptre? Merely that of brute force. By what right did foreigners land on our shores and, monopolizing the land, drive the natives to starve on the sea-shore? By that of conquest. And what is this but an euphemism for brute force? In

those days there had been none to rebuke—no Christ to preach a Gospel of love. It had not been revealed that all men were brethren—offspring of a common Father. Thank God that at last the days of brute force in Christendom are comparatively over, and almost in every land beneath the sun are being heard the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Again, our text has struck a valiant blow at the reign of gold. There was a time when gold was more valued than life and liberty; when we valued men and nations by what we could make out of them in hard cash; when Christian England could send out midnight marauders to steal wives from their sleeping husbands, and tear children from their mother's bosoms, and sell them for foreigner's gold. Yes, not only the Lion, but the Eagle of this continent valued gold more than her boasted liberty. But thank God, the death-knell of such barbarism has been tolled by the clarion tones of our text. Africa, though of a darker complexion, is a neighbor. Thou England, and thou America, shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And it was this principle which freed every slave beneath Britain's flag.

Again, the principle of this text is fast destroying the reign of cunning. God has made some men sharper than others. Some men have all the cunning of the fox. Christ met them in His day. Woe be to any less cunning! They will bleed him as surely as any leech. Such men find out your weak spot, and having found it, leave you more helpless than before. You have

found men of this kind in all callings—in the workshops in the markets, in the stores, and now and then in the portals of the church.

But I ask you to observe that such men are becoming less numerous. They are to-day the exception. We find them only here and there. How is it that the human foxes, who live on the misfortunes of humanity, are becoming scarce? I believe, as I live, that the reason is because of the sentiment of human brotherhood as disseminated by the religion of the Bible. I believe Christianity has created an atmosphere too transparent for such gentlemen to breathe in. Such men breathe freely only in the vile atmosphere of hate, envy, malice, slander, and double dealing. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is a ban against such dispositions, and has the tendency to banish them from all Christian communities.

Notice, again, that the love enjoined in our text is fast cutting down those false distinctions between man and man, called class, or social, distinctions. Whatever separates men into unsympathetic classes and aristocratic cliques, is an enemy to our common brotherhood. Of course, I refer to such cliques as shut themselves up in a little artificial world of their own, excluding the real world, with its sorrows and claims and wants.

You may be fond of music. Another may be fond of music. Having mutual tastes, you associate. Soon another of musical tastes joins your company; and then another, and another, and so on, till you have a

little society, all having a love of music. That kind of association is all right. But suppose you treat with disdain all who do not belong to your set; suppose you refuse to recognize them as fellow-beings, having sacred claims on you,—then you are committing sin. You have no right to live and move and have your being surrounded with congenial friends, and shut out common humanity. By doing so you set up a false barrier between yourself and your brother-man.

But, says one, there are churches in this city existing on that very principle—churches that live in their little church world, and leave all outside to get on as best they can. We reply, if there is such a church in this city it is spurious, and at the day of judgment Christ will spew it out of His mouth. I rejoice, however, that such churches and such false social distinctions are fast disappearing. This is not done by loud opposition, or the thunder of revolution, or the dynamite of Nihilism, but purely by the silent working of that love of our neighbor spoken of in the text.

Love is bringing us closer to God, and hence closer to one another, in spite of difference of taste, in spite of difference of birth, or of education, or creed, or wealth. Love is indeed irresistible! Nailed to the cross, baptized in blood, scorched in fire, tortured on the rack, tried by the ages, it stands to-day just bursting into full glory and fruition. For this the blood of Christ was shed. For this the fires of the martyrs were lit. For this rivers of blood have flowed, and earth's mightiest heroes died!

Notice, lastly, the teaching of love to our neighbor in relation to the poor. And let me tell you that for every eleven hundred throughout the world, only two are rich. So that the majority of mankind are poor. By the poor I mean those honestly poor—poverty caused by climate and by soil. In countries where the winter lasts eight months, men cannot get rich; most of them are poor. Under vicious government, like that of the Soudan, though the land may be as fertile as the Garden of Eden, men cannot be anything but poor. And even the present system of hereditary monopoly in Great Britain must and does leave the great bulk of the people in struggling poverty. Whatever the causes have been, poor men are, and always have been, most numerous.

But how has Christianity met the problem? She has raised up institutions to alleviate this poverty—not in the spirit of pagan charity, not in the spirit which flings a bone at a hungry dog, but purely in the spirit of our text, of human brotherhood—that of love. In addition to meeting the immediate wants of the poor, Christianity is creating an unrest in all civilized society. And this unrest is giving birth to such forces as shall ultimately blot out all poverty that is not the result of the Providence of God Himself. Without adopting the scheme of Henry George, without endorsing the scholarly and yet more radical views of Herbert Spencer, without sympathizing with the bitter spirit of Carlyle's "Past and Present," we can all say, that much of the poverty of man is his

own fault, and not intended of God. Such poverty shall some day disappear, but by no less radical a method than that indicated in our text. Before those words were spoken the poor was the slave of the rich. He could be sold (I was going to say, body and soul) for his debts. Now the honestly poor man reaches out his hands to his fellow and says, "Give me of your gold, for I am hungry, and tired, and sick, and have no food, no bed, no nurse." He claims this, not as a charity, but by a divine right. I dislike to hear men of the last-mentioned class called, indiscriminately, beggars or tramps. Men whose only crime is want of work, or sickness of body. The only tramps are they whom the Bible calls sluggards, who are continually waiting for something to turn up; who lie beneath the Tree of Life expecting the branches to stoop and drop ripe fruit into their mouths.

There are some people who think that men ought never to need help, and that when they get poor it is their own fault. This is plainly an excuse to escape inconvenience. It is inconvenient for them to help the poor, and so they tell you there should be no poor. It is inconvenient for them to visit the sick, and they will tell you that if people took proper care of themselves there would be no sick. You never find such people comforting the dying. They never encourage the despondent. Their whole religion is self, *self*, SELF. Their neighbor is no dearer to them than their neighbor's dog. Only God's mercy, higher than heaven, and deeper than the pit, can save them.

XI.

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

BY REV. F. E. NUGENT,

Lucknow.

*(A paper read before the Guelph Ministerial Association,
April 6th, 1885.)*

IT may be well, at the outset, to understand what is meant by the title given to this paper; and, concerning this, let me say, I wish to be understood as meaning "*immortality of soul in consequence of, and only in consequence of, faith in the atonement of, or made by, Jesus Christ.*"

This view of our nature and its relation to futurity is being advocated, we think, by some, with more zeal than knowledge, and with some danger to the interests of spiritual well-being, and it becomes us as teachers of truth and verity to know whereof we speak.

I find upon enquiry that the conception that "immortality does not inhere in our nature" is not new, but has had a place in the thinking of men for many generations. But I also find that much of the reasoning resorted to in support of the conception is drawn from those sources that cannot, in the very nature of things, be beyond the region of doubt. Physical

science is mainly depended upon for information in relation to the matter, and if science is capable of giving reliable information here, then revelation may no longer speak with authority. But is it not a fact that revelation must have the first place in leading us to a correct conclusion upon this important subject?

Our position is that immortality was the state to which our race was first introduced.

Physical immortality was Adam's possession upon one condition, "Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden," and had this condition been met, death, in any sense, could not have endangered him; for it was said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Now, in order to understand what restraining influence this penalty would have upon Adam, it is necessary to know, as nearly as may be, what he would understand by the term DEATH. And here it is not important whether God spoke in the Hebrew language or not. What we want to know is, how would Adam understand his relation to this new creation to be affected by a violation of the interdiction laid upon him?

Mr. Roberts, in his book on "Christendom Astray," says, "God had made him a living soul, and said, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' or, thou shalt become as though thou hadst not been. . . . Adam is prohibited from touching a certain tree in the midst of the garden, not because

the tree was intrinsically bad, or that there was any sin in the act itself, apart from the interdict, but because such a prohibition, in the circumstances, was the simplest and most convenient mode of educating him in regard to his relations to the Almighty. . . . The command was broken, and the consequence was most disastrous to the Elohim-imaged man. Adam, originally created with a view to a possible immortality, was doomed to return to his original nothingness, and there and then commenced that process of physical decay which terminates all in death. . . . 'Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?'" The answer is simple. Mr. Roberts says, "He is nowhere. 'The dust has returned to the earth as it was, and the life—spirit—has returned to God who gave it.' 'Will he live again?' 'Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' It was the peculiar mission of Christ to bring this truth to light—'He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' He came not simply to reinfuse spiritual vigor into the deadened moral natures of men, but to open up a way of deliverance from the physical law of death, which is sweeping them into the grave, and keeping them there. He came, in fact, to raise men's bodies—which are the men themselves—from the pit of corruption, and endow them, if accepted, with incorruptibility and immortality."

Such is the presentation of doctrine which we aim at refuting, and it will be seen at once that very much depends upon what is understood by the terms *life*

and *death*, as used in Scripture and as applied to man. If by life nothing more is intended than that which enables us to employ our physical powers, and death is only a cessation of physical being, then the argument is reduced to very narrow limits; but if it be found that life means something more than mere existence, and death more than a cessation of organized functional life, then the field for investigation is enlarged beyond the sphere of human observation, and we must be guided by something more far-reaching than human philosophy. There is one very comforting circumstance in connection with this discussion—*i.e.*, the Bible is acknowledged as the source of authority by the parties who differ. Now, as the Bible is one and its Author one, may we not hope to find a satisfactory answer to all our enquiries in connection therewith?

That the Bible speaks of life and death as being sanctioned by the laws of our Creator, and as having the approbation of the laws of His love, will not be denied.

We come, then, to ask, "What is that life with which man is endowed, and that death with which he is threatened, as a creature of God and accountable to Him for his conduct?"

Let it be distinctly understood that this is not a question of superiority of human intellect over animal instinct; is not a question of the happiness of departed saints. It is a question of how that happiness is *procured* and then *secured*. Or, would happiness

beyond this life have been the experience of any? Would life have continued beyond but for a belief in the incarnation and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

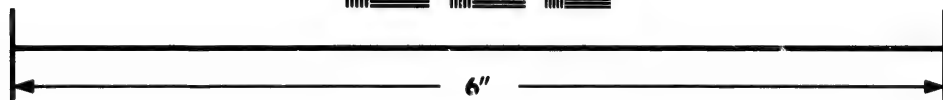
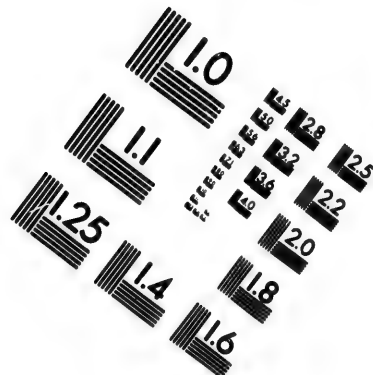
In the creation of man we find that he became a "living soul" after his Maker had breathed into him the "breath of lives." And as I read this in the light of revelation and science, the meaning is: Man the material, and man the spiritual, stood up "in the image and likeness of his Maker," with a material body and a spiritual body. Paul says, "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Now, the word "lives" here seems to be employed for this purpose, to indicate clearly the nature we possess—a living material organism and a living spiritual organism—and the word "life" has its meaning determined by the organism to which it is applied. Applied to the material it has not the same significance that it has when applied to the spiritual; just as the word "house" does not signify the same thing as applied in the House of Hanover and the House of Parliament; neither do the same laws apply to those Houses that may apply to an ordinary dwelling house. And, in our opinion, much of the apparent disagreement that obtains arises from this cause. Words having a variety of signification are used according to the wish of the individual who employs them. Thus the term "spiritual life," as used by Professor Drummond, leads at once to conclusions at variance with his own views, and those of orthodox people in general. The

assumption of his book is, that there is a spiritual life as distinct from ordinary animal or vegetable life as either of them is from the mere existence of inert matter; and that, as a stone cannot be supposed capable of growing more and more like a plant or animal, or more and more living, until it finally reaches full vitality, so a man cannot be supposed capable of growing better and better, or more and more "spiritual," until at last he reaches "spiritual life;" and the words of Scripture are taken as literal and exact, and "spiritual life" is the "gift" of God. Furthermore, he quotes, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." From which two propositions, taken together, as they should be, it follows that if a man does not receive the "gift" of God he cannot inherit eternal life. But if the attainment of spiritual life is not within the power of man—if a human being can no more reach it unaided than a particle of carbon can, unaided, bring itself into connection with a living organism and become itself living—if a man is as helpless in becoming living, in this new sense, as is the unborn babe in the natural sense, then it follows that he is not accountable for the non-attainment of that spiritual life over which he had no control; which conclusion is contrary to the declared belief of Professor Drummond and every one else, all of whom hold that eternal death is the proper punishment of those who do not attain to eternal life.

Now, what are some of the facts in connection with

man's nature as seen in his life and death? Man is a complex being. He has a body and he has a soul, neither of which is man without the other, yet the two are different and distinct in nature and in existence. The soul may be left in Hades, whilst the body, whether in the grave or out of it, may see corruption. The soul and body are mutually dependent. The body cannot act upon things around it except under the guidance of the soul, and the soul cannot act on things around except by means of the body. But the two are not equally dependent. The body has no consciousness of its own. Its peculiar life corresponds to the process of vegetation. The soul is the thinking, conscious being—the higher, the personal element in the complex man. It is superior to the body, which it controls and uses, and which it can present as a living sacrifice unto God. Regarded alone it is not the whole of human nature, and therefore is not the perfect man. But it is perfectly conscious and responsible. Though dependent upon the body for its communication with the outer world, the soul has a distinct existence and separate action. The body changes, decays, and is replaced; but the conscious self abides. Surrounding objects, directly or indirectly, affect the nervous mechanism, and the soul perceives the effects, compares, classifies, and interprets them. Sensations belong to the passing moment. A sensation in the past, or in the future, is impossible. Sensation in itself must be one and simple. It may be the combination of a thousand effects produced by means of an eye and ear,





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of touch and taste; but the result for every moment is one and not many; the whole physical organism has at every moment its environment inducing a corresponding state in the organization. But the soul analyses this state, distributes it into its thousand details, and distinguishes the several elementary sensations. From a full choral harmony it selects an individual voice, and follows it alone through all its wanderings; or in the harsh discord it detects the erring note and silently substitutes the true. These are facts of mental science which materialism can neither deny nor explain. Materialism professes to note the relation between mental states and physical phenomena, but it can know nothing of either, and even less of their correlation, except by appealing to the conscious soul; and the same consciousness which attests the correlation equally attests the distinctiveness and the separateness of the soul's action. Materialism cannot account for the experience of the paralytic. "I tried to stand, but I could not," is fatal to every theory which would deny to the conscious self an existence and a power distinct from that of the body with which it is in union.

This same conclusion must inevitably follow from the facts of moral consciousness. Accountability implies freedom. In order to be free, the soul must be in its nature absolutely above all law as to force, though not as to responsibility. If its acts were determined for it by any laws from without, or from within, or by the power of God Himself, all moral

distinctions would cease. Transgression would be an impossibility. Right and wrong, sin and retribution, could have no meaning. With the loss of this consciousness of separateness in the presence of all other existence, our personality itself would end.

All these considerations, physical, mental and moral, show that man, as a complex being, must not be compared to water (as Mr. Roberts does compare him), which, being composed of two elements, is itself neither, but a resultant differing in properties from both. In him the elements retain their characteristics. It is not enough to say that he is a complex being, consisting partly of spirit and partly of matter, one in personality, and without confusion of natures. He is a self-conscious, accountable agent, existing in union with a material organism which has no consciousness of its own, but which serves as an instrument and medium of communication with the material world.

This conscious self, which we call soul, has all its relations to the world determined by the body. It is evident, therefore, that so long as this union between soul and body is maintained, it is equally correct to say that man *lives* in relation to his fellow-man, or that the soul lives man-ward. He is at "home in the body," but so soon as this union ceases, and he is "absent from the body," man's fellowship with his fellow-man is at an end. In respect to this world he dies: he soon returns to dust. It was in virtue of the material body that he was a man among men, sustaining relationships and fulfilling obligations; and now

that the body is gone, the man, to all earthly appearance, has gone to nothing, and this is bodily death—the cessation of union and fellowship consequent upon the separation of soul and body. But does this separation end all? If so, why are we not justified in following the inclination of natural appetites—"Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." According to Mr. Roberts, the body being the man, when the body dies all is gone into the grave, and will remain there until the morning of the resurrection, when he will come forth and be adjudged worthy of eternal life or death. But is it not a fact that only one of the "lives" of man has been affected by this death? The man, material, is dead, but is the man, spiritual, dead also? Our answer is, No; unless it can be shown that man, as a race, has obtained less by the coming of the second Adam than that he lost by the fall of the first Adam. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" not by any act of faith in them, but by the coming of the second Adam. By Him was life and immortality brought to light; not by a belief in Him. Hence spirit-life is natural to the race—the race being made to live in Him. Now, this life, natural, of the soul must not be confounded with "spiritual life" as set forth in the Scriptures, and which is begotten in us by faith in Christ Jesus—which life is referred to in the conversation with Nicodemus. "That which is born of the spirit is spirit." It is in the nature of the body to die, and it is the nature of the spirit to live, and by grace to pass

from one degree of development to another, even while in connection with the body, until it become "perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

But I will be met just here by "conditional immortality" men—Taylor, Roberts, White, and others—with this objection: "Death was to be the consequence of Adam's disobedience when God created him, and the death threatened can be opposed only to that life which was given him."

To this it has been replied: "True, but how are you assured that God, when He created him, did not give him spirit-life as well as animal life?" President Edwards says: "It is true death is opposed to life, and must be understood according to the nature of that life to which it is opposed." But does it therefore follow that nothing can be meant by it but the loss of animal life? Misery is opposed to happiness, and sorrow is, in Scripture, often opposed to joy; but can we conclude from thence, that nothing is meant in Scripture by sorrow but the loss of joy, or that there is no more in misery than the loss or absence of happiness. And if the death threatened to Adam can with certainty be opposed only to the life given to Adam when God created him, I think a state of perfect, perpetual, and hopeless misery is properly opposed to that state Adam was in when God created him. Nothing is more manifest than that it is agreeable to a very common acceptation of the word "life" in Scripture, that it be understood as signifying a state of excellent and happy existence. Now that which is

opposed to that life and state in which Adam was created, is a state of totally confirmed wickedness, and perfectly hopeless misery, under the Divine displeasure and curse; not excluding temporal death, or the destruction of the body as an introduction to it. Wherefore "it is not all of death to die."

The term "life" is used to indicate a state, a condition, as well as being, existing—thus intellectual, moral, and spiritual life; and "death" is used to denote the opposite of life in any and all of these senses; therefore, as in the case of the word "life," its meaning must be determined by the nature or state to which it is applied. Death, spiritually, does not mean loss of consciousness; if so, it must do something more than stand on the opposite of "life spiritual," because the terms here are not used to denote being, existence, but a "state." "Life," a state of pleasure, happiness; and "death," a state of misery, woe. "Dead in trespasses and in sins," cannot mean anything more than not in Christ—i.e., it describes the sinner's condition, not his nature. His nature is to live—as in the case of the rich man—but his condition is the opposite of that happiness which is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

"Yes, but," the objector continues, "the death that was to come on Adam, as the punishment of his disobedience, was opposed to that life which he would have had as the reward of his obedience in case he had not sinned."

Obedience and disobedience are contraries; the

threatenings and promises, which are sanctions of law, are set in direct opposition, and the promised rewards and threatened punishments are most properly taken as each other's opposites. But none will deny that the "life" which would have been Adam's reward, if he had persisted in obedience, was "eternal life," and, therefore, we argue justly that the death which stands opposed to that life is manifestly "eternal death"—a death widely different from the death we now die.

It is objected, again, that those punitive words, "perish," "destruction" and "death," in the Bible, indicate the utter destruction and annihilation of the life principle, and therefore contradict the doctrine that the mind is immortal. The objector claims that when it is said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," and, "That the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction," and also, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and other kindred passages, it is therefore understood that they will cease to exist—be extinguished.

This would, indeed, upset our doctrine of the soul's immortality by the will of God. But do the passages teach such a doctrine? Do the words contain any such breadth of meaning? No one will contend it is necessarily deduced from any philological analysis of them. We have a short method, then, to take with the objection, and which will show how mistaken are his interpretations, and how groundless his assumptions:—"Lord save us, we perish," said the disciples, when

trembling in apprehension, not of annihilation, but of drowning. "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," means nothing more, certainly, than being put to death. The prodigal exclaims, "I perish with hunger." Our fastidious objector will hardly make more out of this than that the prodigal was in danger of dying of hunger.

Still less reason is there for supposing that the punishment of DEATH implies the annihilation of the condemned; for, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." If the objector chooses to take this in its full force, we do not see how he is to escape the utter annihilation of the race, but if, as he assumes, there is a "second death," not necessarily included in this, then let us see what light the Bible sheds upon the nature of this "second death."

We are here told that the "fearful," and "unbelieving," and the "abominable," and whoremongers, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the "second death." This certainly cannot be annihilation, for into this lake, or state, are to be cast, as partakers of this "second death," the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, and death and hell, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall

be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night. Surely this is something different and far more appalling than extinction of being.

These Scriptures teach us that we must live on and on forever; that if lost, no annihilation of being will ever come to relieve the soul of its agony, but it shall continue to exist amid the agonies of the "second death" while the unending ages roll on—

"Immortality o'ersweep

All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peals,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth :

Thou liv'st forever."—Byron.

Then may we close with the thrilling apostrophe of another to the soul: "Immortal spirit! let thy thoughts travel down the vale of coming ages, and view thyself, still enduring, strong in the possession of eternal youth. Thou wilt then look around thee, and from the heights of eternity wilt see all the thrones, the kingdoms, the glories, the struggles and the pains of earth forever vanished and still. Thou wilt seek in vain to behold from afar the wondrous triumphs of art, the renowned cities, the illustrious empires, and the fields of blood where so much glory was won. The greatness of the mighty dead, and the pomp of the now living, will all have passed away,

sunken into one promiscuous grave. The earth itself may revolve dark and gloomy in its accustomed orbit; widely spread solitude and desolation may pervade its once crowded scenes; but thou wilt still remain exempt from mutability and death, still enduring amid so much change, undying amid so much decay. No fearful disaster can quench thy torch of being; no lapse of ages diminish the freshness of thy youth. As lasting as the God who made thee, thou and He alike will outlive the old age and dissolution of the material universe, and soar above its crumbling ruins, rejoicing in the progression of an endless duration."



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XII.

THE SERVANT OF CHRIST THE ONLY FREEMAN.

BY REV. J. W. HOLMES,
Guelph.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—
ROMANS VI. 22.

THE Bible account of sin furnishes the only information we have as to its character and extent. It tells us "sin reigned unto *death*;" by which we understand its reign was universal and absolute—universal as embracing every soul of man, and absolute as enslaving every power of the soul. But there are forces stronger than sin, and a power at least equally universal and absolute; and as sin has "reigned unto death," even so grace shall "reign through righteousness unto life by Jesus Christ our Lord;" therefore, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

The announcement of prophecy concerning Jesus was that His mission was "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." Any functionary may, on authority,

make a proclamation and declare a royal decree, but in this case it was necessary to meet certain conditions, and the deliverer must take the place of the captive; therefore He became subject not to *sin* but to *death*, and by the sacrifice of His life, or, as it is written, "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." This deliverance was as perfect as the bondage was complete, and as the reign and dominion of sin was "unto death," so the reign of grace was "unto life"—"eternal life." The reign of one ended in the pit; that of the other elevated to the throne. In the treatment of this subject we shall notice—The Captive released, The Service, transferred The Servant promoted, The Captive crowned.

I. THE CAPTIVE RELEASED.

"Being made free from sin."—(1) *From its bondage.*

How universally absurd do we find mankind's estimate of liberty, or the conception formed of what constitutes true freedom. Absolute liberty is a possibility only to absolute purity; the farther removed from that the greater the bondage and the more hopeless the captivity, and yet such may be recovered "out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." Nothing is so tyrannical and despotic as sin—which men look upon as liberty—and no condition so truly free as the bondage of Christian captivity. The human heart is a fortress, walled and manned, guarded

and watched. A tyrant reigns therein, and the despotic power of a ruler of a hundred millions of serfs is not more absolute and hopeless than that which Satan sways, as the "strong man armed," in this fortress. The mission of the "STRONGER than the strong man armed" was to break the power of this oppressor, to take possession of this throne, and accomplish the destruction of all the antagonism of the unrenewed heart against the Prince of Peace. Men have tried to deliver themselves from the terrible yoke of sin and assert their liberty; others have asserted the fallacy of the charge of their vassalage; others, again, failing in this, assert they are not responsible for the situation, and on this ground refuse their emancipation. Is it not the worst kind of infatuation for those born in slavery to refuse the liberty offered them? But such are the character and effects of sin, it blinds and stupefies the victims of its awful power so that we are incapable of realizing our responsibility, and that we are sharers in the guilt of our fathers. God gave men a law; did they keep it? He gave them a rule of morality; did they conform to it? He gave them flattering promises did they regard them? He gave them the most inspiring and ennobling motives; were they not crushed by the sensuality of the soul? And all the better qualities of the heart have been destroyed by sin. How sin has asserted its dominion, how universal and absolute has been its influence, how complete has been the desolation made! It has spared nought that was lovely in humanity; the noblest intellects it has usurped

and employed, the most sacred covenants it has broken. It entered with impious daring into the very presence of purity, and sent it forth from its Eden reeling under the blighting curse of a law violated and a God dishonored. And see how speedily its terrible inducences have accumulated, what hosts it has marshalled, what crimes have followed in its tread, what forms of sin, what depths of degradation, how dreadful and rapid has been its progress, until the world is filled with violence! It is seen in the dogging steps of the assassin, it flames in the torch of the incendiary, it burns in the lusts of the sensual, it raves in the asylums of the insane, it feeds on all the elements of true manhood, it sits on the throne of the hearts of the covetous and avaricious, it grinds the faces of the poor, and violates every article of the golden rule; it does to every man the very opposite to what we would have every man do to us. In this completeness of the desolations of sin who will come to our help? Who will stand up and challenge its right of domination? He who came to preach deliverance to the captive, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke. He shall take "the prey from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered."

We shall be also free from—(2) *Its defilement.*

Not only is man the captive of sin, but that captivity is degrading. "That which was born of the flesh is flesh;" who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not only has the captive been set free; Christ has entered into his prison house, broken his fetters, and

said to him "Follow Me." But He came also to put away sin—He is the destroyer of its deadly power. We look over a wilderness and we see the fever of a poisoned life raging ; numbers are dying in agony, and they cry to Moses for relief. Had he our modern revival hymns, he would have said or sung, "There is life for a look at the crucified One." The sinner was made free from the bondage of his Egypt, but he must be made free from the desire to return again—he must be made not only a new creature, saved from the power of sin, but also saved from the love of sinning. The pen of inspiration alone can describe the defilement of sin. It has succeeded, but how can we who are accustomed to think in human thoughts, and measure by human conceptions, understand or fully appreciate these descriptions? Inspired though they were, they call to their help Israel's national miseries. It directs attention to the disease of leprosy, the most repulsive, and hopelessly incurable. It tells of the "sow, washed," returning to her "wallowing in the mire;" but the darkest shade seems to be given in this description when we are told he "*lieth in wickedness,*" in the lowest condition of impurity, and rests in his lair. Ask a modern photographer to picture the heavens, or a limner to paint the sun ; with equal possibility of success may we hope to describe, even with the representations of inspiration, the defiling character of sin. "Though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much soap," saith the prophet, "yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord ;"

and as no thought of ours can realize, so no act of ours can remove, this condition of the soul. The heart may be broken, but that does not change it; tears, ceaseless and penitential, may flow, but its vileness is too deeply stained,—the marks of sin are as indelibly fixed in the soul as the writing on the paper, “which appears, even after being charred and burnt by the fire.” But, O amazing grace! though your sins be as “scarlet” or “crimson,” they shall be as “snow” or as “wool.” The prophets saw it, the apostles proclaimed it, the blood of Jesus Christ “cleanseth *us* from *all* sin. “Free from sin!” Who can describe this power of sin? One has said, “It is like fire, running through all the ramifications of humanity.” And surely the experience of every conscious mind will exemplify the truth of the word, “*hateful and hating one another.*” Envy, jealousy, self-will, pride, disregard of the divine word, or God’s authority, governed by our own wishes and fancies, desires and opinions, and no hatred of such conditions, or desire to avail ourselves of the provision of grace, that where sin abounded grace might “much more abound;” and with impious daring, in the depths of our degradation we repeat the folly of the oppressor of God’s people, and, satisfied with our condition, say, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?” Witness the haughty Assyrian captain descend somewhat reluctantly into the hated Jordan, and obey the direction of the prophet; he descends the loathsome leper—yes, loathsome in his princeliness—he comes out a new creature; the power of a divine

chemistry has put him through a process of elimination. What feelings must have seized him as he experienced the thrill of a new life. The blood circulates coolly through his veins; his skin—can he believe it?—no longer parched with a leprous fever, is as the skin of a little child. What term can more appropriately describe the situation than that of the text—“made free”? He put away the leprosy by the power of His word. He put away sin by the “sacrifice of Himself.” It is said, “When ye were the servants of sin ye were *free from righteousness.*” No description of human depravity was ever stronger than this. Separated in every power, faculty, emotion, desire, and affection from righteousness, as when the body and spirit are separated. So in the sense of the text, he is dead to, or “free from sin,” from the yoke and presence, from the guilt and power of sin, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

“O the boundless blessedness to me,
Loved, saved, forgiven, renewed and cleansed by Thee.”

II. THE SERVICE TRANSFERRED.

“Become servants to God.” We must learn what constitutes acceptable service, and also keep in mind the full import of the word in the present connection. If they were before the servants of sin, they are now as completely the servants of God. Before, there was a complete and perfect domination of sin—every power, intellectual and moral, under sin. Now, in all fairness, by a parity of reasoning, if the term servant means

that completeness of vassalage in the one case, it means the same in the other ; the same in extent and completeness, but necessarily differing in character and results. If in the one case it means the *slave* of sin—and the best critics so interpret the word—in the other it means the slave of God, and the act as voluntary in the one case as in the other, and the proprietorship as absolute in the one as in the other ; the difficulty will, therefore, be removed in discovering what is required of us.

There will necessarily be—(1) *An eagerness to know.*

There will be a self-surrendering consecration to God in the submissive words, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such a thing cannot be once thought of as the servant assuming the dictator. Even in this we have the very highest example, " Not *my* will but *thine* be done." Our chief concern will be, not to know how little will satisfy our Master, but how much love can accomplish. Christian service means full freedom of action in a *new* life, and not—as so many, alas, mistake—any particular restraint on the *old* life. Not sacrifices made, but greater good obtained. The basis of Christian service is Christian love, and the basis of Christian love is gratitude to Christ ; therefore the test of Christian character is that Christ is the chief end, and eagerness to know His will implies *constant attention*, deep research in the divine oracles. No true servant can, or will, with impunity, neglect his instructions, and God has written them out for our guidance. " He that is of God heareth

God's words." We must not, therefore, be deceived here; if we err, we do so wilfully; our instructions are recorded, and if we profess to be the servants of Christ we must give ear to His directions and obey His voice: hence the constant attitude of the newly emancipated soul will be expressed in the words the Master has put into our lips, "I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies" (Psa. cxix. 125).

(2) *A willingness to do.*

We need not repeat here the story of the ransomed slave who offered herself in perpetual service to her benefactor, and whose only reply to expressed surprise as to her conduct was, "He redeemed me." This service means an honest, constant, and unreserved employment for God of that which is His; there must be the full realization of the fact that we belong to God.

The word that fixes our relation does not say, you *ought not* to be, but "*you are not your own.*" We are His by the right of redemption, and by our own free voluntarily choice; then to refuse Him that which belongs to Him, the accusation of the prophet is true of us, "Ye have robbed God." Someone has said, "Give God your hands full, and He will give you His hands full." All that belongs to God is at your service. "Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours." He has given you as His servant the liberties of His house, and handed you the keys and said, "Be thou faithful." "Yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead." We cannot conceive of

anything grander, nobler, greater, or more blessed, than to be thus a witness, a servant, a child of God, and to serve Him in all that is true and beautiful and good, making Him our chief joy. The onlooker, or the worldling, may sometimes think the servant of God the veriest slave, cramped up in a corner, and not enjoying full liberty, and the constraint manifested by some of the professed servants of Jesus may often justify the supposition; but the reason it so appears is because something is reserved, there is not full surrender or abandon of self, and hence such a servant has not full trust given him. When we reserve, God reserves. Full consecration and confidence secures perfect freedom, and consequently the highest happiness. When we are fully at His disposal it will be safe for the Master to trust us; then we shall serve Him in all that is "true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report," and from this we can say to our worldly friend, "What do you say to *your* liberty when compared with *ours*?" O! thou child of such untold wealth and privilege, servant of the living God, do not, I beseech you, belittle your relationship by acknowledging your dissatisfaction and your longing after the world's treasures, while your Sovereign Lord has thrown wide open to you the whole sweep of His possessions. Why go back into bondage again when "His service is perfect freedom?"

This service will be characterized by—(3) *Patient endurance.*

We do not use the word endurance as intimating

something that is to be merely tolerated, but in the sense of patient waiting, and this patience is understood as applying as much to active as to passive service, but not confined to it: "Ye have need of patience" — "By patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality," and you shall have "eternal life." No other power is needed to sustain you but that all-powerful passion, "the love of Christ," the inspiring power of a living gratitude. Keep the King's honor in view and "all things shall work together" for your good. Even your enemies shall be made to do you homage. Who is this coming on the king's charger, with the king's crown and the royal robe? and who leads him, proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor"? One was plotting against the just, the other true to the God of his fathers. Now his enemy shall prove that his violent dealing shall come down "on his own pate," with the force of a terrible retribution.

Be assured of this, the secret of this *attention*, *obedience* and *patience* is found in a proper answer to the question—"Lovest thou Me?" Sacrifice finds its truest meaning here.

We may be objects of scorn, of hate, of contempt and opposition, misrepresented and misunderstood, and yet the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the jewels of the King, looking forward to the close of worktime and the reception of reward. We would say to you, "Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in

the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

"A little longer, then life, true, immortal,
(Not this our shadowy life) will be thine own,
And thou shalt stand where winged archangels worship,
And trembling bow before the great white throne."

III. THE SERVANT PROMOTED.

"Fruit unto holiness." That was a noble reply of the victor in the Olympic games, when, asked by a bystander, "Spartan, what will you gain by this victory?" he answered, "I shall have the honor to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince." The requirements of the Church are a determined opposition to sin, and uncompromising devotion to Christ. And here we may observe—

(1) *That these are the necessities of the present.*

Of good works or fruits unto holiness it is said, "God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them." The mistake into which a large proportion of both saints and sinners have fallen is to look upon religion as a matter of preparation for death, instead of not only a fitness to live but life itself; and life, especially religious or spiritual life, is active and aggressive. "The natural attitude of the Church of Christ is warfare." Of the Head of the Church it is said, He is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." The follower of Jesus must be like Him, at least in character. His life will be such as to work marvels, a life at which at least the world will be sur-

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prised. The service rendered to God tends to and results in holiness; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity—*unto iniquity*: even so now yield your members servants to righteousness—*unto holiness*. As the service of sin tends to iniquity, so the service of righteousness tends to holiness. The Church now requires and always required this from its members and the world needs now and always needed this. It is by such "doings," such devotedness and consistency of service, that the world is to be captured and laid at the feet of Jesus. Not only are Christians called soldiers of Christ, but they are "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified," and "herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." A recent writer has said, "We want a religion, firm in its integrity, that bears heavily not only on the 'exceeding sinfulness of sin,' but on the exceeding rascality of lying and stealing; that does not consider forty cents *returned*, for one hundred cents *given*, according to the Gospel, though it may be according to law; a religion that looks on a man who has failed in trade and continues to live in luxury, as a thief; so men live and act as if God and eternity were never thought of. Though the treasures unjustly gained may have no voice, yet the day is coming when the voice of conscience will confront the wicked and remind him of words he would not listen to in his hey-day. 'Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high.'

If evil spirits of the present day could enter into all the parlors and chambers, plain and princely, whose furniture was bought with other men's money, and could set the several articles in motion, each in the direction of its rightful owner, what a movement there would be among the mirrors; what a rattling of silver plate; what a hustling of chairs and tables, and many a bed would take up itself and walk. If they could enter into the various forms of property gotten by fraud, some things beside swine would rush into the sea. Many a fat, fancy horse—in the carriage or under the saddle—would no doubt make its way down 'the steep,' and rider and horse would be 'choked in the depths.'" The result of the service rendered will be holiness, such as will take all crookedness, and all perversity, and all falseness out of our relationships and dealings with our fellow-men.

(2) *Opportunity is confined to the present.*

What will be the worth of our service or testimony for Jesus when there is not a solitary soul to be convinced or won to Christ? The Christian's work up yonder will not be bearing witness, but bearing palms and wearing crowns. Who will stop to receive your laudations or listen to your testimony, when the whole host that no man can number shall unite in the hal-lujahs of the skies? Your work then will be an entirely different one from that which is laid upon you here. By faithfulness here you may increase His kingdom, but though you spend a whole eternity adoring "the Lamb that was slain," not a sinner will

be saved by it. The work to be done here is "fruit unto holiness." You must be an efficient worker together with God to lessen sin and increase holiness. You decrease the extent and power of sin as you save sinners; you are instrumental in rescuing men from the same bondage from which you have recently escaped. Every soul you lead to Christ is a temple created to the Holy Ghost. It is said a hundred thousand men were employed in Egypt to construct a pyramidal tomb for a dead king; how much more noble and enduring the work in which we are engaged in building temples to the living God!

This fruitfulness is not merely the possession of proper thoughts and right sentiments, or in cherishing certain moods or frames of mind; fruit unto holiness means activity, not only life but life toiling. Holiness is the heart and powers in action; do you ask me "Where?" My answer is, Where you have been assigned, where your character is not questioned, and where your influence for God is needed; where waywardness is to be restrained and struggling feebleness is contending against tremendous odds; where emissaries of sin are vigilant and constant in their endeavors to destroy; where principle is in danger of being compromised for self-interest; where a cold and scarcely audible profession has been made to supersede demonstrative Christian activity; where the honor of God and the kingdom of Christ is made to occupy a secondary, if any place, in the thoughts and plans of men; where Christian enterprises are carried on more

by the constraining forces of pressure from without, and arguments directed to the intellect, than by the forces of a deep wellspring of love and the overflowing affections of the heart. Your position is a favorable one, your capabilities are equal to your obligations, your field most inviting, your companions in this service of love are the Lord's household, and your reward will be a sceptre and a crown.

We shall now follow in thought this subject of grace and consider—

IV. THE CAPTIVE CROWNED.

"The end everlasting life." This is a familiar phrase, yet how little we know of its blessedness of meaning; we become familiar with the terms of the Divine Word without stopping to consider what they imply.

There are elements of life which the good and bad, the righteous and wicked, possess in common, and in which there is not necessarily involved similarity of character, just as there are in the present life. This will be readily conceded from your present experience and observation. That to which I now refer is *consciousness*, and which is common to both. Here, so to speak, they are one, and starting with this common possession they advance. We carry this thought to a future life, and we say with reference to these two classes, there is an element of life in the future as in the present, which the righteous and the wicked alike

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possess. The first element that we shall notice, therefore, is that of—

(1) *Eternal consciousness.*

To a believer in the Bible it is quite unnecessary to enter into an attempt to prove the doctrine of conscious immortality. There are some who by a certain system of interpretation, which we will call literalism, have endeavored to prove the world would come to an end at a given time. The same principles of interpretation, if applied to the doctrine of a future state, would perhaps demonstrate—with the same uncertainty—that man has no soul distinct from his body. If we found sentiments of this kind propounded by Hume or Hobbs we might not be surprised, but to find them advanced by professedly Christian men we may well be surprised at the assertion of these essential principles of Deism.

We need not adopt a line of argument to prove that communications are made to the spirit of man that in the very nature of things cannot be made to his bodily senses—senses which he has in common with the whole of the animal creation. If he may be, as he positively is, the subject of divine spiritual influences—the communication of the divine with the human—we certainly have strong presumptive evidence of this same communication or fellowship, independent of the body: as, for instance, when Christ refers to the matter of the resurrection, and of God calling Himself the “God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob” (Ex. iii. 6), He distinctly stated He is not the “God of the dead, but

of the living;" but their bodies were long since in the grave, and yet there was a living, conscious Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob. But Abraham's body was in the grave *three hundred and thirty* years before this was uttered, Isaac's *two hundred and twenty-five*, and Jacob's *one hundred and ninety-eight*. If the "spirit returns to God, who gave it," while "the dust returns to the earth as it was;" if the spirit of the saint departs to be "with Christ, which is far better;" if it "puts off this tabernacle," it must have a conscious existence. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." There must have been a conscious personality with Jesus, for the body was in possession of others; but the spirit was in paradise, or pleasure, or delight, as the term implies. Let any candid mind study with ordinary care the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; and the doctrine taught by the Saviour is true, though in a parable, as if by veritable history, is the doctrine of conscious existence in a future state. Any person studying this parable and so interpreting it, or *misinterpreting* it, to prove the contrary, would pervert any language that could be employed. On the subject of locality or sphere, however, metaphysicians may talk of *space* as one of the properties of body, as if nothing but body could be limited to space;—to fill immensity is one of the incommunicable properties of Deity. We cannot conceive of a created spirit, angelic or human, of which it may not be truly said, "It is *here*, and not *there*." Again, as to the matter of consciousness in a future

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state, our Lord directly teaches that the soul cannot be killed, when the body may. These are not certainly interchangeable terms; the body is not the soul, and the soul is not the body. If the soul was the mere result of animal organism, then whoever killed the one would most certainly kill the other. Men are able to kill the body, but are not able to "kill the soul." Again, we find the apostle of the Gentiles teaching that whether the righteous live or die, they live with Christ, "who died for us that whether we wake or sleep" (live or die) we should live together with Him.

Eternal life also implies—(2) *Eternal enjoyment.*

This, the next step in the condition of the saved, between the saved and unsaved will be one of divergence. While in the body each had their enjoyment; the difference was in the character of it,—one in sin, the other in holiness—one in Satan's service, the other in the service of Christ—the enjoyment of the one sensual, that of the other spiritual. They part forever; the joy of the saint is unchanged in its character, and the only change it experiences is a change in degree; intensified by the very same thing that destroys the possibility of enjoyment by the other—the severance of soul and body. Relieved from the "earthly house" he rises in ecstasies of delight, and bathes in the glory of the divine presence; the other sinks *to*, and *in*, the miseries of an indescribable despair. If the doctrine of eternal consciousness be true, which the Word of God declares, then the eternity

of enjoyment is indisputable; and that not the negative delight he has as he thinks of deliverances wrought of conflicts and victories, as, often footsore and weary, he pressed toward his house on high, but his enjoyment is a positive and increasing life of bliss unutterable,—the Christian now can prove the truth of what he never half understood before: "The upright shall dwell in thy presence," "the paradise of God," "the Holy City," "the inheritance of the saints," "the heaven of heavens,"—better still—"They shall sit with Me on My throne." Who is it speaks? No longer the Man of Sorrows, no longer the outcast of a Jewish rabble, no longer the subject of mock royalty, but the triumphant Jesus. Yes, blessed Jesus, Thou hast

"Made slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown."

"In Thy presence is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

(3) *It is an eternity of progression.*

It is everlasting life in the most favorable circumstances for development. "This is one of the most delightful considerations, the perpetual progress of the soul toward the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at it."* And if no point of attainment here limits the enjoyment of a saint of God, how can we fully measure the extent or comprehensiveness of the term "evermore." Nothing stationary in the know-

* Wesley.

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edge or bliss of heaven. The "song is a song of degrees"—it is worth contending for, brethren.

We have presented to you the facts of the sinner's bondage, his deliverance by grace in Christ Jesus, his voluntary captivity in the service of God, his progress in Christian life, and fruitfulness in holiness, his elevation to the highest position in the gift of his Master, sustained and enforced by highest authority and the strongest claims; and "what shall we more say?" Shall we review the longsuffering mercy of God, the infinite merit and power of a living INTERCESSOR, the compassionate and persistent strivings of the Holy Spirit, the joys of eternal life, the miseries of everlasting woe, the degrading character of the service of sin, the everlasting and ennobling influence of the service of Christ, to persuade you to be reconciled to God?

There is a throne of grace, and He who sits thereon invites you to it. There is an open fountain, and pardon offered to the most deeply guilty. Purity for the most degraded sinner, liberty for the most despairing captive, new life for all who are dead in sin. Jesus calls you, do not persistently turn away from His entreaties; consent that He shall break the yoke of sin off your neck, and by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy, and thus elevate you, His *willing* captive, from the *dungeon* to the THRONE.

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